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HELLENIC REPUBLIC
H.Q.A.A.
HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY
FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

DEPARTMENT of Information Management

TEI of KAVALA

July 4th, 2010

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External Evaluation Committee

The Committee responsible for the External Evaluation of the Department of Information Management of the Technological Educational Institute of Kavala consisted of the following four (4) expert evaluators drawn from the Registry constituted by the HQAA in accordance with Law 3374/2005:

1. Professor Nikolaos Tzokas (Coordinator)
University of East Anglia, Norwich Business School, UK
2. Director of studies Professor Nikos Macheridis
Lund University Sweden
3. Kyriakos V. Krestas, MSEE
Ex IBM-Germany Management Consultant
4. Dr Nikolaos Vitantzakis,
Ex Manager OTE, Greece

Introduction

The External Evaluation Procedure

The EEC arrived in Kavala on the 28th of June. The first meeting of the day involved the President of TEI Kavalas, who was accompanied by the Vice President of Academic Affairs, the Head of the Department of Information Management and the Head of the School of Management and Economics. Following this the committee had a meeting with OMEA, faculty (permanent and non-permanent) and various services of the TEI including Careers. Visits to the various premises of the Institution including teaching infrastructure, offices and library facilities were followed by meetings with the department's Secretariat and students on the final day of the visit.

The EEC made full use of the material placed to our disposal. Available to the committee were among others:

- ✓ Internal evaluation report
- ✓ Statistical data evaluation report
- ✓ Samples of final year projects/dissertations
- ✓ Study guide from the department
- ✓ Careers guide from TEI Kavalas

The atmosphere during the visit was cordial and collegial, while remaining at a professional level. Faculty was friendly and helped the committee's work by answering questions, engaging in dialogue and providing information and data, wherever possible.

The EEC expresses its gratitude to the management, faculty and staff of the department for facilitating the visit.

Comments from the EEC on the external evaluation procedure

The EEC is aware that perhaps some of the proposals/suggestions may not meet the existing institutional and legal framework in Greece.

A . Curriculum

To be filled separately for each undergraduate , graduate and doctoral programme.

APPROACH

The Information Management Department of the TEI Kavalas, established in September 2000, is unique in Greece and is essentially offering a hybrid curriculum/degree in Information Management.

The objective of the programme is to generate new business managers and executives with knowledge of business administration and information technology covering the needs of small and medium-sized enterprises.

For the purpose of devising the original curriculum the department investigated various internal and external to TEI programmes and sought active participation and feedback from businesses. The curriculum was updated once in 2004 and recently in 2009 by incorporating views from alumni, students and businesses.

The curriculum is responding to the objectives of the Department, while its application is monitored and controlled through a certified quality assurance process that operates exemplary and could serve as a model for implementation in other TEI and AEI educational institutions.

The Department seeks to obtain a stand-alone post-graduate program, relative to its cognate area.

IMPLEMENTATION

The program of study adopted in 2008/09, had a wide range and depth. However individual modules were cutting across each other with some overlaps, which were noticed and were eliminated in the 2009/10 curriculum.

There are two areas of specialization namely a) business administration and b) information technology. There is a distinction between theoretical and practical courses and workshops with a detailed weekly programme.

Teaching and learning takes place in very good site/classrooms, laboratories, with good office equipment, reading rooms/library and multi-purpose rooms. Laboratories have sufficient electronic equipment, while all teaching spaces and public spaces are particularly well looked after. A Business Game and case studies are used to bridge theoretical knowledge and practice.

Specialized areas of the comprehensive programme of studies are covered by a large number of external faculty (43), which is recruited or renewed its contract annually. This non-permanent faculty is responsible, after recruitment, for each module they deliver. Learning and teaching material is displayed in the e-class system used by the Department. Students are provided with the opportunity to participate in European programmes (via Erasmus).

RESULTS

Curriculum and all relevant information is electronic and made available to all students. As it was documented, through discussions with students, the curriculum is interesting and allows significant depth to their preferred specialisation route.

It was not clear to the EEC whether or not a module was included in the curriculum dealing with the issue of the reliability of information used for management decisions. Such a module, of course, is expected given the character of the programme and its attention to Information Management.

Overall delivery of the curriculum is benefitting from the use of faculty (permanent and non-permanent) who are experts in their field (most of them have Post Graduate and Doctoral studies) and have considerable practical experience. What facilitates delivery of the curriculum are the good relationships between students and faculty. Nevertheless it was noted that non-permanent faculty do not have offices or hot-desk facilities, which do not allow them to further enhance relationships with the students and with each other. However, contact with students was facilitated by means of email correspondence.

There is a positive culture in the department and a collegiate atmosphere that supports mutual respect, constructive work ethics and exchange of ideas, but more is required as regards the non-permanent faculty, who do not seem to be integrated well or enough.

IMPROVEMENT

Currently courses are classified as theoretical and practical ones. EEC recommends all theoretical courses to introduce practical teaching methods for example: case studies, team presentations, role playing, external presentations (experts and/or entrepreneurs), market research etc.

Furthermore an effort should be made so that courses are structured to reflect modern teaching methods. In addition the department's faculty should agree a common method regarding class assignments and how they contribute to the final student grade. The EEC agrees also with the department that assignments contribute to knowledge and experience of the students. Assignments are effective learning and assessment methods, and they can motivate and engage students.

EEC recommends the gradual inclusion into the programme of a number of new modules in areas such as business ethics and corporate social responsibility, on environmental issues, on quality control and assurance of the reliability of the information, on team building and group dynamic (psychology) as well as on legal issues. The inclusion of such modules would allow students to have a much more holistic understanding of their contribution in organisational decision making and organisational life and will help make the curriculum modern and very appealing to both students and businesses/employers. Proposed modules can take the form of either fully assessed or not assessed engagement.

The planned postgraduate program in collaboration with an international University

is expected to provide considerable benefits. Benefits for the department will include transfer of academic and administrative expertise, which will upgrade the level of and the function of the department's visibility and reputation locally and nationally.

It is proposed that the Department should define and describe the contents of each module in the curriculum in close collaboration with the responsible professor and associated mentor. We recommend the introduction of a yearly formal procedure for updating the Module Outlines/Descriptions for all modules. Currently, this rests on the goodwill of the academic staff. The recruitment of temporary staff should be based on those specifications taking into account the competence and the experience of the candidate.

It is recommended to open up and expose the Department to the local and regional community by:

- invitations to businessmen and professionals to participate in lectures/seminars.
- organize workshops with staff of the department, students, members of local community and businessmen as participants. Proposed agenda for workshops could be the needs and recruitment targets of the labour market, organisation and operation of local enterprises, opportunities for new firms creation and so on.
- Every year organize a conference in order to bring faculty, students and businesses together. This will provide the opportunity for students and faculty to learn the latest challenges faced by the business world and in doing so adapt their curriculum to address these challenges. By the same token provide the opportunity to business to appreciate the work at TEI and contribute towards its long-term plans and goals.

B. Teaching

APPROACH:

Traditional teaching methods and case studies, are supported by quite impressive rooms and lecture theatres-including e-learning (e-class system). It seems that both academic staff and students use this technology increasingly.

Students have the opportunity to apply and use in a lab environment special software packages which enhance students' experience and provide real opportunities for practical benefits to students.

Lists of literature (Internal Evaluation Report 2008/2009, table 12-5, p 130-147) that EEC took note of display books released several years ago and publishers that are not internationally well recognised. On the other hand, some of the literature is more tailored to specific courses and only in some modules the bibliography is accompanied by references to academic journals.

The teaching assessment approach seems to be the standard one which presumably is used by the sector across the country. It could be improved considerably by implementing a number of steps.

- Introducing compulsory assignments and/or presentations in the majority of the modules.
- Adopting an assessment strategy that perceives assessment as part of the learning experience.
- Enhancing the feedback provided to students from their assignments.
- Rethinking the whole issue of the final project and compulsory work placement, thus providing clear links and a degree of integration between the two.

IMPLEMENTATION

The level and quality of teaching and teaching preparation is good. The level of textbooks and on-line help is good (satisfactory e-library and e-journal subscription).

Teaching staff with high competence, most of permanent staff and many of temporary staff have doctoral degrees with many years of teaching and practical experience. The competence of the staff selected seems to be more focused on specific areas than directly related to the overall purpose of the department and to the learning outcomes of the curriculum –i.e. integration of management of information and business administration.

There is a clear link between research and teaching, since the majority of the faculty is involved in research activities. The teaching staff tries to direct the students interest to research by engaging students in research seminars, among other things. Relating teaching to research will probably motivate and engage students so that they can participate more with what is going on in the departments as well as with their studies and wider discipline.

The department has made commendable efforts to make electronically available teaching material and administrative activities. Despite that it is not easy for the department to allocate management and administrative tasks to a limited number of permanent staff (7) since at the same time it is expected considerable teaching from them. A large number of temporary staff is engaged which puts additional pressure to socialize new faculty to learning outcomes of the curriculum and courses, values of the department, expected quality levels, examination rules etc.

The students regularly evaluate the academic staff and the modules /courses through a formal procedure. The department has taken bold pioneering steps in capturing students' views and opinions. Nevertheless, we note that the outcomes/findings are not fully utilised to further enhance the departments' performance since there is no formal procedure to discuss and reflect on these results and in doing so develop ways to integrate the voice of the students to the curriculum development.

Student employment seems to be working well. However, it is recommended that closer relationship with the graduates/alumni who can act as ambassadors for the department should be formally developed.

We note that the Final Year Project should be redesigned and improved.

Faculty and Student mobility to other institutions is relatively limited. They both should be encouraged and expanded.

The EEC notice also that during 2000-2009, 922 male and 1054 female students registered in the curriculum while there are no women permanent faculty and the number of women temporary faculty is rather low. A higher degree of gender diversity amongst faculty and staff should be explored.

RESULTS

The large number of dropouts, the prolonged duration of studies and the large number of students registered in the first five years, has been creating difficult conditions for the academic staff.

Nevertheless here seems to be a good collaboration between active students and faculty; evidenced, among others, by the students' acceptance and assistance to the evaluation procedure for modules. The limited number (6) of students interviewed by members of the committee was very enthusiastic and convinced that the knowledge and skills they acquired during the curriculum would make it easier for them to quickly into employment. Some of these students are also motivated to maintain strong and ongoing relationships with the department and its faculty when they graduate.

The department is fully aware of their strengths and weaknesses in terms of their teaching and learning competencies. The faculty members have knowledge of different teaching methods, traditional lecture based teaching, computer applications, case studies, videos, etc.

Between 2000-2004, 1324 students were registered 488 students graduated and 168

dropped out (internal evaluation report, 2008-9, table 2-5, p. 26). It should be noted here the large number of students who exceed the 4 year duration for their studies and the apparent lack of participation in exams and lectures. The department has to pay more attention to questions as to who and why drop out, why a lot of students take more time than expected, which teaching methods motivate students etc.

IMPROVEMENTS

The EEC is concerned with the fact that from the 2010-11 students with 10 or below grade will be given the opportunity to enrol and study in the department. This will create additional pressure to an already stretched faculty which will be asked to teach students of very low performance.

Huge opportunities exist in improving the *Supervision of the Final Project* and their *Work Placement*, which should be pursued.

More Specifically the EEC recommends:

- Consider redesigning the Study Guide so that a clear link between the Final Project and Work Placement as well as to learning outcomes of the curriculum is established.
- Emphasize that the dissertation must be well structured and follow well established formats (i.e. introduction and research questions, aim, method, theory, analysis, references etc). It seems that already the department's faculty directs students to this, but no uniform approach to dissertation structure was evident.
- Further compliance to a standardised structure for the Final Project; considering recruitment of a specialist that for some years would undertake the supervision of the students so that the quality of the dissertations/projects will be improved.
- Formulate and communicate appropriate examination criteria. It should be made clear that the examination of dissertation/project, both those directed to area of informatics and to area of business administration, will be based on these criteria so that the students can be encouraged to follow specific formats and structures.
- A record of formal and compulsory meetings throughout the completion of the Final Project should be kept.

Other Recommendations regarding Teaching:

- The Department should consider ways to assist the weaker students when they enrol. The faculty and the EEC felt that the acceptance of students scoring less than 10 as an entry requirements is a negative and highly dangerous development (to be re-introduced in 2010-2011 academic year).
- The large number of ad-hoc, non permanent –Part-Time faculty; over 40 – is not a healthy feature and cannot fulfil the long term objectives of the Department.
- The EEC recommends dividing the external/temporary staff into groups by

similar subjects. Each group has a mentor, a member of the permanent academic staff of the Department who is responsible for socialising them into the life of the department and its overall aims and objectives. In doing so a higher degree of integration can be achieved.

- A committee that will formally review all students' performance every year per cohort. More importantly the committee should monitor the performance of the Final Year students and reflect on the grades for each individual student across modules.
- Committees (i.e 1st- 2nd-3rd-4th year) that will review, moderate and suggest improvements on all pieces of assessment and their corresponding model answers, should be institutionalised and operate as soon as possible.

C. Research

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

APPROACH

Similarly to other TEI in Greece there is a fundamental problem with the way research is perceived and practiced within the TEI Kavalas. Indeed our discussion and assessment of the full time permanent faculty in the department allowed us to conclude that there is research competence and most importantly a clear willingness to participate in research projects and publish nationally and internationally. However, we were also made aware of the very small number of permanent faculty (7), the large number of teaching and administrative duties of this faculty as well as the extremely high student staff ratio (SSR) and the apparent lack of any infrastructure within the department and TEI Kavalas as a whole for research or research oriented postgraduate programmes. This among other things means that there is no sufficient funding for participation in conferences; research travels/stays, hosting of researchers from other institutions, etc.

Bearing in mind the problem above it should be acknowledged that the department's faculty has been active and encouraging research in its many different forms i.e. from participation to research projects, to conferences, publications of books and refereed articles. There is no doubt that there is competence in the department. Discussions with faculty members provided clear evidence that research undertaken and planned is of high quality, addressing topics that are of both national and international interest.

Finally, the fact that TEI's library is part of the national consortium for access to several digital libraries largely facilitates electronic access to a good number of scientific resources (scientific journals or conference proceedings); thus allowing faculty to have direct access to all relevant to their discipline scientific material.

IMPLEMENTATION

The research activity of the faculty (permanent and non-permanent) is expressed in many different forms which include leadership roles in research projects, participation in research projects, publications in books and refereed and non-refereed journals as well as participation in local, national and international conferences. Of particular importance here is that research activities of the department cover a wide spectrum of orientation i.e. local, regional, national and international.

The following table provides a holistic picture of the research output by the department since 2004. On average there are 4.5 research outputs per faculty member for the past 5 years. Importantly, there are on average 29 citations per permanent faculty member and 7.5 citations per research output in the department.

Table: Publication

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
2009	1	11	0	15	0	2	0
2008	2	11	0	10	0	0	7
2007	1	11	0	13	0	1	5
2006	0	6	0	11	1	2	0
2005	1	10	0	18	0	3	1
2004	2	4	0	8	0	1	1
Total	7	53	0	75	1	9	14

Where:

- A: Books
- B: Publications in refereed journals
- C: Publications in non-refereed journals
- D: Refereed Conference proceedings
- E: Non-refereed conference proceedings
- F: Book chapters
- G: Other research works

In addition to the above output the department has been active with the organization of important events such as the national conference in business and management (June, 2010).

RESULTS

Given the high SSR alongside administrative and teaching duties of the permanent faculty, the research performance of the department is encouraging but without doubt in need of considerable attention.

As expected the vast majority of the research output is in professional journals and with only few notable exemptions in journals that are not highly ranked. Moreover, there is no evidence that the department maintains any formal research relationships with institutions in Greece or abroad.

It is important to mention here that the department has acknowledged in its evaluation report the lack of research culture and infrastructure within TEI Kavalas and has outlined some of the key factors that need to be taken into account to improve this situation.

The view of the EEC as regards the factors contributing to this relatively low performance in terms of research are as follow:

1. Lack of a clear research strategy by TEI Kavalas and the department
2. Lack of any research infrastructure
3. Workload that does not allow quality research
4. Lack of a cognate Masters programme.

IMPROVEMENT

The following recommendations were made by members of the EEC.

1. There is a clear need for the Institution (TEI Kavalas) to form a research strategy. This should provide the framework within which the various departments and faculty therein can develop their own research plans and directions. It is important that the applied nature of the research undertaken within TEI alongside the scholarship research element of its faculty is acknowledged, celebrated and encouraged. In doing so the Institution and the department in question will benefit from further reflection on how their engagement with, particularly, the local and regional industry as well as other national and international educational Institutions would benefit their research capacity and output. Critical to this strategy is the realisation of the Institution and Department's uniqueness as compared to other TEI and departments.
2. A research infrastructure needs to be developed within the department. This should include, among other things, visiting researchers, research mentoring of faculty, the creation of applied research centres, research seminars, faculty research plans, a work in progress series, a clear structure for encouraging faculty to make use of their sabbatical as well as a clear workload allocation system that rewards research output of the highest impact.
3. Finally a research culture and output is encouraged when faculty is allowed to engage in depth with their subject area and with students who are keen to engage too. This was perceived to be viable through the creation of a cognate postgraduate programme in Information Management.

D. All Other Services

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

APPROACH

For all services controlled by the department a conscious effort is made to provide efficient and effective support and infrastructure to faculty, staff and students.

The *secretariat* is well organized. All *classrooms*, *laboratories* and permanent faculty *offices* are modern and comfortable. The *library* is easily accessible. Plenty of *areas* for the students to work individually and in teams.

The *career office* is not functioning at present due to lack of funds. General facilities such as Cafeteria, Sport etc. are very good.

IMPLEMENTATION

Two persons who are fully supported by an efficient work-place electronic infrastructure, which includes, in addition to modern hardware and office software, a series effective application, staff the department's secretariat.

Information "kiosk", unique to this department, provides continuity to *secretariat* services throughout the day. The same service is supported by the internet thus students can submit their requests to the secretariat from anywhere and at any time.

A free internet access is available to all members of the department, thus they cannot only communicate via e-mail but they can also access a number of other services and current department news.

All *classrooms* have a workstation at the teacher's desk and a projector attached to it. All *laboratories* are populated with large number of workstations for individual use and a fully equipped teacher's desk for effective training.

Faculty and staff have individual workstations as part of their office equipment.

The *library*, in addition to all recommended books and literature, has a number of relevant journals/periodical and a large number of electronic books, journal databases and educational audiovisual material.

The *career office* facility, while active, was providing support to students in various areas such as:

- Career Guidance and Placement Assistance
- Post Graduate Studies and scholarship Counselling
- Career days and other events
- Practice Semester Placement
- Departmental newspaper

At present only the leader of this office is available; therefore, career support is minimal. As a result the contacts to potential employers cannot be followed up. On the positive side, all documents produced by the office are available on line. In addition a very comprehensive printed guide "for graduates seeking employment" is

available and in high demand from both TEI-Kavala and other TEI graduates.

RESULTS

The department considers the administrative services that it controls adequate for its operations. However the lack of space for a student file archive was outlined. Of course the lack of a fully functioning *career office* is of great concern.

It is self understood that this particular department requires very up-to-date equipment and software which presents a constant need for financial funds.

IMPROVEMENTS

There are a number of improvements recommended by the EEC.

First and foremost funding of a fully functioning *career office* should be secured as soon as possible. Such a support is paramount to an innovative studies programme such as the one provided by the department.

The student records archive space should be made available at the department building.

An office with a number of desks which could be used by the external teachers, while present at the department, would be of great help to enhance the productivity of these members of the teaching community and engage them fully in the department. Again space should not be an inhibitor.

Collaboration with social, cultural and production organizations

The department has acknowledged the important role it plays from a social and cultural perspective and in particular in the local and regional community. This is expressed mainly with life-long learning opportunities, engagement with local and regional schools and the organisation of events that help increase the knowledge base of the regional industry.

Among other things, the department has invested in a videoconferencing room which facilitates its engagement with distance learning seminars.

Similarly to other areas, the department was able to articulate a strong understanding of what is required to do in terms of its collaboration with social, cultural and other organisations locally, nationally and internationally. However, it was not very clear as to how early activity of the past was maintained and more importantly how it was planned to be sustained in the future. The Department recognised the need for a PR officer.

E. Strategic Planning, Perspectives for Improvement and Dealing with Potential Inhibiting Factors

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

Based on the self-assessment document the department has a very professional oriented focus namely the (sic) “development of “experts” who possess the competence to appreciate, create, evaluate and economically utilise the flow and the products of information” (p.55 of self-evaluation documents).

Overall the department is very profession/discipline centric in that its declared objectives refer to its effort for enhancing students’ knowledge and skill in Information Management. While such an orientation may seem appropriate for a department in a technological educational institution (TEI) it nevertheless may reduce the ability of its faculty to appreciate the multiplicity and complexity of the various factors contributing to their ability to deliver their core purpose. In addition such a focus exaggerates uncontrollable by the department factors that influence its operation and final results e.g. professional accreditations, admissions criteria and quality of students admitted. Finally such a focus is excessively teaching oriented and may preclude a full appreciation of the contributions that research, community and business engagement as well as life at the institution and in Kavala may have to the full development of the “expert”.

Bearing in mind the above, the EEC congratulates the team behind the self-evaluation document for its detailed appreciation of the department’s situation, reflection of what works or not, SWOT analysis and clarity of recommendations which have been broken into short-term, medium- and long-term.

It was encouraging to see that in the short-term the department is addressing a number of critical issues. In the medium to long-term the department has planned important collaborations with international institutions which will help them develop a more international orientation.

As regards the teaching strategy for the department it is important to mention that the combination of a new PGT in IM, alongside engaging more businesses and alumni would help enhance the quality of the students learning experience and associated professionalism. There is no doubt that this quality assessment process has motivated administration, faculty and staff to engage in a useful dialogue whereby their particular roles and how they contribute to the overall mission of the department and the whole Institution is better appreciated.

As regards research, despite the expressed interest by the faculty to enhance their research effort and output, it is still unclear as to how this can be achieved. The lack of quality time for research is the most important factor inhibiting faculty from undertaking quality applied or basic research in their fields. Furthermore, the lack of the research culture and clear strategic research goals for the future, whether this is for applied or basic research or simply scholarship that embodies the need for faculty to remain up to date and fully engaged with developments in their research area of interest, is precluding any progress in the research front.

Finally as regards the strategy of the department for a closer engagement with the local and regional industry, other than the lack of time, the lack of resource in the careers and placement office will have to be addressed.

Nevertheless one needs to reflect on these strategic priorities with full appreciation of the volatile external environment. Without any doubt a key obstacle to the implementation of any of the department's plans is the lack of a stable framework for the educational sector in Greece. Among others, indecisiveness as regards the status of the TEI and constant deterioration of the admitted students owing to paradoxical centrally (government)-decided admission strategies jeopardise the effort of faculty in this department. While this environment may apply to the whole of the educational sector in Greece they become particularly important for departments such as the Information Management as it tries to diffuse the unique character, skills and competencies of its graduates to an ever challenging and adverse economic environment in Greece.

However one should acknowledge that these present challenges and opportunities for the department which however do not appear to have received considerable strategic recognition and thinking from the department.

Indeed the challenging economic environment in Greece creates, among other things, important demands for cost containment, and above all the need for more effective management of human capital within contemporary organisations. In particular within small and medium size enterprises the need to employ people who can do more things effectively and efficiently within the company is becoming extremely important. This fits well with the overall direction of the Department in that its hybrid degree may be very attractive indeed. By the same token firms will be looking for graduates with enhanced readiness and employability. As such the relationship with the industry and their strategic engagement in curriculum design, teaching, research and for assisting with student placements is becoming imperative. Nevertheless, relationships with firms and practical training within firms appeared to have been neglected from the strategic imperatives of the department.

Bearing in mind the above, it is important to acknowledge that the department has spent considerable time and effort to reflect upon its achievement and the strategic directions it followed, the positive and negative elements of their case, as well as the areas that require attention (p.107 to 120 of the self-assessment document).

However, the EEC has noted that:

1. In outlining the strategic objectives, we could not detect an importance and risk register alongside timing of these objectives, and a clear allocation of duties to various bodies of the department alongside expected outcomes and time horizons.
2. It appears that the department's strategy follows a rather 'product or production oriented' approach i.e. students with better knowledge of the academic domain information management will increase their chances of employment. However, this approach appears to contradict contemporary

developments in international educational environments where a more 'market and student centric oriented' approach is recommended i.e. knowledge is co-created through the interplay of faculty, industry professional and students; and it is the unique competencies that are developed in these interrelationships that increase students' chances of employment. In doing so the department should reflect on the full spectrum of the learning experience of its students, trace the educational journey of the student within its premises and appreciate the opportunities it is presented with from developing and maintaining a strong relationship with its alumni.

3. Finally, whereas the department has clear strategic advantages, owing to its uniqueness, it nevertheless faces the danger of not being able to support its educational/subject basis given the small number of permanent faculty and the diversity of its subject area. There is no doubt that more investment in faculty is needed.

F. Final Conclusions and recommendations of the EEC

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

As a relatively new department the IM has achieved significant successes over the years but it is also facing considerable challenges.

Key achievements include:

1. A clear understanding of positioning in the Greek educational sector.
2. Important leadership throughout its lifetime, which is supported by capable faculty and staff.
3. Some clear administrative structures, supported by committees that look after critical areas of the IM's operation.
4. A high esprit de corps amongst faculty and staff.

Key challenges the department is facing are as follows:

Internal challenges

1. High student staff ratio which is expected to increase in the near future.
2. Low quality intake which is expected to become even lower in the near future.
3. Very low attendance of lectures by students.
4. Very small number of final graduates.
5. Substantial demand for more administrative time and student mentoring from its permanent faculty as quality procedures and the need for more formalisation intensifies.

External challenges:

1. A saturated market placement for students and graduates.
2. Competition from HEIs.
3. Significant competition for resources within the TEI Kavalas.
4. A confusing (confused) national educational framework for TEIs.
5. An adverse economic environment, nationally and internationally.

Opportunities for the department are as follows:

1. An increased need for information management skills by contemporary organisations to support reduction of costs and a more innovative competitive posture through the better management of information.
2. Opportunity to enhance the perceived value of the programme through closer collaboration with local and regional industry and production organisations.

3. Opportunity for collaboration with international institutions and the development of a postgraduate programme in IM.

Bearing in mind the above mentioned achievements, challenges and opportunities the EEC would like to recommend the following as a matter of priority.

1. As regards the overall strategy of the IM.

- 1.1. The department needs a better articulation of its overall mission, aims and objectives and accompanying strategy.
- 1.2. The department should establish a strategic advisory board, where employers and other stakeholders participate.
- 1.3. External strategic research alliances with other educational institutions, both nationally and internationally are needed.
- 1.4. More attention to enhancing the reputation and increase awareness and visibility of the department regionally, nationally and internationally.
- 1.5. We recommend that the department adopts a “student centric approach” and in collaboration with local authorities and organisations enhance the student experience.
- 1.6. Finally the department should promote a strategy for increasing the employability of its graduates. Here the engagement of the local and regional business community is imperative.

2. As regards teaching and curriculum development

- 2.1. Consider formative as well as summative forms of assessment, and approach assessment as part of the overall students’ learning experience.
- 2.2. Regular formal evaluation of the curriculum (i.e. every three years), by employing a process whereby faculty, current students, employers and alumni engage in constructive dialogue. It is imperative that there is a common understanding of how the various parts of the curriculum contribute to its hybrid nature and therefore uniqueness and competitive advantage.
- 2.3. It is proposed that the Department defines and describes in detail the contents of each module in the curriculum in close collaboration with the responsible professor and associated mentor in the case of non-permanent faculty. Clear intended learning outcomes alongside declared module content, assessment criteria, bibliography and related references should be common practice with a high level of consistency amongst modules.
- 2.4. Immediate development of an “Inside Information Management” seminar series to encourage participation from industry, ideally through active engagement of the department’s students in its organisation and implementation.
- 2.5. Formal boards of examiners to assess and appreciate performance of each student throughout the year is required. This should be followed by

feedback to students, thus helping them to understand their weaknesses and ways to improve their performance throughout the year.

- 2.6. Commence cognate postgraduate studies in the department to enhance the link between research in the department and learning and teaching. Collaboration with a foreign institution would help the department enhance its own research and teaching practices.

3. As regards research.

- 3.1. Establish a Research Committee to instigate clear priorities for future research, allocate the required resources and develop partnerships with other academic institutions.
- 3.2. Develop a research strategy to support the uniqueness of the programme and its attractiveness for businesses.
- 3.3. Set up a Research Seminar Series, supported by internal and external contributors.
- 3.4. Enhance the departments' participation in local, national and international research projects.
- 3.5. Create Knowledge Transfer Partnerships with local organizations.

4. As regards other services.

- 4.1. It is imperative that the careers office is re-instated in full and with greater support from the department and the institution. This is critical for the successful operation of the department in the immediate future.
- 4.2. Engage the alumni network

Beyond the recommendations above it is important to outline once more that the department must find ways to integrate its considerable body of non-permanent, part-time faculty. We urge the creation of dedicated space for part-time faculty.

To conclude, the EEC found the visit very interesting and productive. There is confidence in the programme and in the ability of the faculty and staff. Moreover there is no doubt that this is a department with great potential but also facing considerable challenges. This is not unique to this department; rather it reflects structural problems of the Greek educational framework and environment. To overcome this situation the IM's faculty needs to become much more proactive and entrepreneurial. This would require a change of perspective, whereby faculty appreciates that the strategic objectives of the department can only be achieved in the mutual effort of faculty, staff, students, businesses, alumni and other stakeholders. The uniqueness of its hybrid subject area alongside its capable faculty and staff provide significant opportunities for ongoing development and future success.