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HELLENIC REPUBLIC
H.Q.A.
HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE AND
ACCREDITATION AGENCY

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

TEI CRETE

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1. EXTERNAL EVALUATION COMMITTEE

The Committee responsible for the External Evaluation of the Technological Education Institution named: TEI of Crete comprised the following five (5) expert evaluators drawn from the Registry kept by the HQA in accordance with Law 3374/2005 and the Law 4009/2011:

1. Prof. Symeon Giannakos (Coordinator) Salve Regina University, Newport, Rhode Island, USA
2. Dr. Nicholas Buris, NEBENS, LLC, Deer Park, USA
3. Prof. Evangelos Dedousis, American University in Dubai, United Arab Emirates
4. Prof. Dimitris Michailakis, University of Linköping, Sweden
5. Prof. Sotiris Skevoulis, Pace University, USA

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 The External Evaluation Procedure

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) for TEI Crete arrived in Heraklion on May 8. Its first meeting took place in the evening of the same day. Subsequently, on May 9, the EEC was briefed by the representative of ADIP regarding the evaluation process. Following this meeting, the EEC met with the President and the Vice Presidents of TEI, and the Quality Assurance Unit of TEI (MODIP). On the same day, the EEC toured key facilities such as the Library, the School of Agriculture, Food and Nutrition, and the School of Management and Economics. The EEC also held meetings with Deans and Department Heads of the following: the School of Applied Sciences and the School of Management & Economics; the School of Health & Social Welfare Services; and, the School of Agriculture, Food & Nutrition. Finally, the ECC held a meeting with the President and members of the TEI Council.

On May 10, the EEC met with the Head of Administration, the Division Heads and the Department Heads. The EEC also met with the Department of International Relations (Studies) which is responsible for the Erasmus Program. Following this, the ECC met with undergraduate students, the Research Committee of TEI, and toured School laboratories. By the end of the day, the EEC met with graduate students, TEI alumni, and external stakeholders.

On May 11, the ECC toured the Center for Plasma Physics and Lasers of the School of Applied Sciences in Rethymno, the Departments of Electronics and Environmental & Natural Resources in Chania, and the Department of Music Technology and Acoustics in Rethymno. Finally, the EEC presented its oral report to the President of TEI on May 12 in the main campus in Heraklion.

The EEC read the Internal Self Evaluation Report, along with individual reports from each department and reports from different administrative and faculty committees. Additional reports consulted included the TEI cyber security report, the intellectual property licencing policy, and software tool for electronic gathering of internal evaluation data. The EEC also requested, received and examined a small random sample of graduate program theses.

<i>Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&2.1):</i>	Tick
Worthy of merit	X
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating (optional): The institution facilitated the evaluation process with diligence, dedication and collegiality.

2.2 The Self-Evaluation Procedure

The EEC determined that the Self-Evaluation Procedure of the Institution was comprehensive and effective. The self-evaluation process was facilitated as follows: each academic department elected the Internal Evaluation Groups (IEGs/OMEAs), responsible for the collection and compilation of data and reports at the department level; reports generated at this level were then funnelled to the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU/MODIP); MODIP interacted with the IEGs/OMEAs in a

cooperative and consultative manner in compiling the Internal Self-Evaluation Report. The procedure is characterized by a reciprocal and complementary manner and the outcome has been effective. The EEC easily recognized that all levels involved did so enthusiastically and consistently. Each level demonstrated that it values the process and is eager to be an active participant. All together, they appeared committed to a constructive process that will lead to the improvement of the Institution. The generated Internal Self -Evaluation Report (410 pages) was detailed, descriptive, and comprehensive. The EEC did not detect any difficulties in the procedure, but feels that the procedure was a positive undertaking. The objectives of the internal evaluation procedure have been met.

Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&2.2):

	Tick
Worthy of merit	X
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating (optional): The Institution took the self-evaluation process seriously and made it an integral procedure of the Institution's working environment.

3. PROFILE OF THE INSTITUTION UNDER EVALUATION

3.1 Institutional Governance, Leadership & Strategy

The vision of TEI Crete is the national and international recognition for quality education and research.

The mission of TEI Crete is to provide high quality undergraduate and postgraduate education and to produce innovation towards contributing to the development of the economy and society of Crete and Greece.

The EEC determined that the Institution's priorities in achieving its goals are in research and development for practical applications which are subsequently channelled to corresponding external agencies for the purpose of generating recognition and resources.

Research activities with international scope facilitate the effectiveness and improvement of instruction at both the graduate and undergraduate levels.

The EEC's assessment of the Institution's ability to improve is positive. Already the Institution has made substantial efforts towards improvement and the general consensus is that it has become one of the leading TEI in the country.

At the same time, the EEC recommends that the mission statement of the Institution be concisely stated and distinctly separated from its goals (i.e., the strategy and the manner the mission is to be accomplished). A short concise paragraph should be both sufficient and instrumental.

<i>Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&3.1.1):</i>	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	X
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating (optional): The mission statement should be concise.

3.1.2 Organizational Development Strategy

The organizational development strategy of the Institution is formulated and implemented through the organizational structure of its academic and service components. The Institution is relying on articulating, decimating and implementing its strategy through its administrative structure. The highest administrative body is the Institution's Council. The Institution's executive duties are exercised by the President of the Institution elected by the Institution's Assembly of full-time faculty. The President is aided by three Vice Presidents responsible for advising the President in Academic, Financial and Administrative issues. The academic side of the Institution is separated into five Schools and 15 Department (to be reduced to 13 by 2018). Each School is administered by the School's Director aided by the School's Assembly of full-time faculty. Within each School, Departments are run by a Department Chair/President, aided by the Department's Assembly of full-time faculty. The lower level of the academic structure is made up by working committees.

The administrative structure of the Institution is comprised by four divisions, seven departments, and six independent departments and offices under the direction of the General Secretary.

The academic organizational structure is sensible and effective albeit that it needs to be presented clearly through the creation of a hierarchical chart. On the other hand, the administrative structure appears to be an organizational labyrinth which, as a result, is not as effective as it could be, and certainly lacks efficiency. The EEC understands this reflects external realities, but still there is a strong need for streamlining the structure. Therefore, the EEC suggests that the administrative services be streamlined, be less labour-intensive, and rely on technology through a unified information system.

Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&3.1.2):

	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	X
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating (optional): The EEC determines that the rating of the administrative component was significantly lacking in comparison to the academic one.

3.1.3 Academic Development Strategy

Testimonies at the department level revealed an effective and efficient cooperation between the administration and the academic departments. The relationship is complimentary and cooperative. Typically, the administration provides its unequivocal support for the departments and their operations.

Academic goals are achieved by the formulation of programs of study in each department at both the undergraduate and the graduate levels. There is strong interdisciplinary approach to education between departments. This makes learning more efficient and cost effective. This is certainly readily evident at the graduate level.

At least some departments have relied on corresponding suggestions of their external evaluation process to implement curriculum revisions and updates.

One quarter of tuition generated through graduate education is retained by each department to aid in their curricular development and augment teaching positions and course offerings.

To a great extent, the improvement in the quality of instruction is relying on the undertaking of research.

Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&3.1.3):

	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	X
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating (optional): There are procedure to update the program of studies but their improvement can be more timely and extensive.

3.1.4 Research Strategy

Given the fact that some departments are engaging in research that has been easily recognized by their corresponding research communities at the international level, the EEC is relying in its evaluation on accepted international standards for research. The Institution and the departments conducting research follow and track internationally accepted performance metrics, such as funding, impact factors, etc. According to this metrics, the Institution overall fares well in research. The impact factor is 1.09 of the international average. Its research funding puts it in the top ten of academic institutions in Greece and the only TEI to be ranked this high.

In particular the Center for Plasma Physics and Lasers (CPPL) is an impressive laboratory with the potential of increasing the international impact of the Institution and expanding the graduate program.

The green waste treatment efforts and its monetarization efforts must be commended. Perhaps, by collaborating with the school of management and economics to develop a business plan and strategy, as well as with other research projects and the TEI as a whole, it could benefit financially.

The Institution has developed a research committee to facilitate the writing of grants and coordinate research proposals and submissions. It also develops the policy on licensing intellectual property rights.

<i>Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&3.1.4):</i>	Tick
Worthy of merit	X
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating (optional): It should be pointed out that despite the “worthy of merit” grade given to this category, the research culture is not consistent or uniform across the Institution. For example, the School of Health and Welfare Services could exploit funding opportunities from local municipalities performing studies on social issues, such as refugee crises, low-income families, and other worthy causes.

3.1.5 Financial Strategy

Since this is a public institution, its operational expenses are primarily determined by the state budget and there is no much flexibility in the allocation of general funds to specific accounts. Predominantly, the budget of the Institution is determined externally. Still, for the sake of running the Institution efficiently, its financial picture should be presented in a clear and concise way.

It should be mentioned that the Institution is securing additional funds from graduate tuition and research monetarization, but no specified way is mentioned in the internal self-evaluation report of how these moneys is being reallocated. There should be a clear and specific budget report that is based on up-to-date logistical/accounting practices. Subsequent to completing the draft report, TEI Crete informed the EEC that in cases where specific departments secure external R&D funding, a fixed percentage of the funds is left to the department’s discretionary account. Such a policy provides an incentive to the department for additional research and serves as an example to other departments. Additionally, TEI Crete has policies in place for income received from the utilization of its facilities by external entities and from income received from its Continuing Education offerings.

<i>Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&3.1.5):</i>	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	X
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating (optional): The EEC was made available a large quantity of financial data through the Internal Self-Evaluation Report. The EEC recommends more clarity and specificity in the presentation and disclosure of allocations. Also, the EEC recommends to the Institution to be more creative with monetizing its Intellectual Property and make the monetizing part of if financial strategy.

3.1.6 Building and Grounds Infrastructure Strategy

Although, the main campus is relatively concentrated and all areas are easily accessible, the Institution, in its entirety, does not correspond to the model 1 campus/HEI. It seems that the geographic distribution of TEI facilities and/or Departments in different localities of Crete was done with the purpose to create a symbiotic relation with corresponding localities. For example, the Institution uses rent-free facilities made available to it in local communities. The EEC formed the impression that the distribution was largely the result of decisions taken at the national level. In certain cases, as with the one in Sitia, where the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics is located, and in Agios Nikolaos, where the Department of Business Administration is located, the deviation is so great that academic operations becomes dysfunctional. Departments in other locations fare much better. Even though they are located in considerable distances from the main campus, they are not isolated.

<i>Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&3.1.6):</i>	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	X
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating (optional): By design, the TEI of Crete overall deviates grossly from "model 1 campus." The geographic distribution of the TEI campuses has benefitted and strengthened the institution's impact and relationships with local business and the public sector. However, departments housed in the various campuses are not carefully planned and some of them are not self sufficient to mitigate the hardships of being remote. As a result, students suffer from a lower level of services while faculty do not have opportunities to collaborate as easily. The EEC discussed the issue at some length with both the TEI and the regional elected public servants. The EEC urges the TEI and the authorities to seek creative ways to redistribute the TEI functions and programs so that the benefits of the aforementioned deviations from the "model 1 campus" are increased and its disadvantages are minimized.

3.1.7 Environmental Strategy

The Department of Agriculture, in collaboration with the Department of Environmental Resources Engineering, has initiated and completed successfully an innovative and effective way of managing and converting organic waste into organic fertilizer. Beyond this initiative, the Institution is not pursuing a vigorous campaign in recycling, campus beautification, and energy saving. A general predisposition does exist and is evident in the self-evaluation report, but concrete steps are not being undertaken.

<i>Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&3.1.7):</i>	
Worthy of merit	Tick
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	X
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating (optional): The TEI, mainly through the department of Agriculture and the department of Environmental and Natural Resources Engineering, pursues research that is conducive to green technologies. Some of the research has produced well recognized results and appreciated by the community at large. The EEC urges the TEI to target becoming an example of best "green" practices so that it instills in its students and its visitors "green" and environmentally friendly mentality. The EEC was told, however, that even though parts of TEI utilized separate bins for recyclable and regular waste, the public waste management services would collect and treat both as regular waste, effectively annihilating the TEI's efforts. Therefore, the EEC urges the TEI to establish educational material and informational seminars for the community at large.

3.1.8 Social Strategy

TEI Crete is well integrated in the local and regional life of Crete through a mutually reinforcing respectful manner. Both sides have developed an integral relationship that has produced a harmonious symbiosis.

In her meetings and deliberation, the EEC met with local authorities and from different local communities. They unanimously expressed their appreciation, respect, and admiration for TEI Crete. In return, the TEI is appreciative of the local and regional political and economic environment, and is enthusiastically making serious efforts to contribute to the local and regional life of the Island.

<i>Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&3.1.8):</i>	
Worthy of merit	X
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating (optional): Based on testimonies of its members, the ECC feels confident that the relationship between TEI Crete and the local and regional community is far better than all other cases the EEC members have had the opportunity to evaluate.

3.1.9 Internationalization Strategy

The TEI of Crete follows some of the best approaches of ensuring its integration in the international educational community. It has a well functioning student exchange program at the undergraduate level. In fact, its Erasmus program was awarded second place in implementation in all of Europe in 2013, and it recently got awarded first place in six out of eight categories in all institutions within Greece. The TEI office of International Affairs is staffed by an enthusiastic staff and students seemed well served. It is also worth mentioning that this office has concrete quantitative goals for continuous improvement.

Additionally, several research teams of TEI have international collaborators and/or run summer schools which further facilitate international interaction. Newly created MSc programs, some with courses taught in English, aim at attracting international students.

The EEC would like to convey to the leadership of the Office of International Affairs to consider making available to possible and incoming exchange students all pertinent information in a timely fashion. International students seeking pertinent information about the student exchange program should have all they need to make travel arrangements, courses, registration information, etc. at least six months in advance of the projected time of arrival. In this context, the Office may consider creating an information orientation guideline in the form of Frequent Asked Questions (FAQ) and making it available online.

<i>Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&3.1.9):</i>	Tick
Worthy of merit	X
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating (optional): While the EEC was positively impressed by the TEI internationalization efforts, certain things could be improved. The architecture and structure of the information available at the TEI web site could be better organized. The Greek and English versions of the web site should be congruent. In fact, it is paramount that the terminology used of the various departments, Labs, program, processes, etc. be consistent. It is not uncommon to see more than one names used for the same laboratory in the web site, student theses and other official TEI documentation. Furthermore, the EEC urges the TEI to consider having all MSc theses be written in English.

3.1.10 Student Welfare Strategy

TEI Crete provides a number of facilities and services to accommodate student needs. TEI Crete is blessed with the good fortune to be located in one of the friendliest climatic conditions in Greece. Providing for the needs of the students outside the academic setting is not as challenging. In areas where special needs need to be addressed, the Institution has taken the appropriate steps to meet such demands. For example, the library provides facilities to meet the needs of the blind. The Gym is available for the physical wellbeing of the students, and student cultural activities are being facilitated. Intramural sports and cultural activities (e.g. plays) are organized and student participate

adequately. Still there might be a need to expand and improve facilities to accommodate people with disabilities. In this area the Institution may wish to develop a proactive strategy.

<i>Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&3.1.10):</i>	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	X
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating (optional): Overall the Institution provides basic or adequate facilities and services to meet student needs. The Institution should develop a proactive strategy for the development of advanced services for all possible cases of special needs.

3.2 Strategy for Study Programmes

3.2.1 Programmes of Undergraduate Studies (first cycle)

As a technical academic institution, TEI Crete provides a number of undergraduate degrees in technical and applied sciences, typical of institutions of such academic purpose. For a variety of reasons, some endemic to the Institutions and some external to it, some programs are clearly stronger than others.

In professional programs, like Nursing, Social Work or Nutrition, the EEC witnessed a greater degree of both extensive and intensive faculty-student interaction. In applied sciences programs, the same degree of interaction prevails in the laboratory classes, but not in theoretical classes where class attendance is low.

In all programs, the EEC witnessed an intensive and extensive faculty-student interaction in out-of-class settings, such as providing students with additional and specific help. In this regard, the faculty is making an admirable out-of-class effort to meet student needs.

Faculty efforts to meet student learning demands due to the reduction in the number of the teaching faculty resulted from the economic crisis is easily observed. In this regard, the faculty has gone way beyond the call of duty, teaching longer hours than it is normally provided by their teaching obligations.

Student attendance in theoretical classes in the applied sciences programs is, typical of the situation in many institutions of higher education, extremely low and more so later in an academic term rather than in the beginning.

For the minority of students who attend classes regularly, course offerings, courses availability, and the quality of teaching is excellent. This became evident in testimonies of current students and alumni.

Probably the biggest concern at the undergraduate level is the faculty-to-student ratio in the laboratory classes. Lab classes are forced to exceed the enrolment number despite the fact that the availability of equipped does not permit it. It is also in this area that the reduction of the teaching faculty creates problems, just because the attendance of laboratory classes is mandatory.

<i>Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&3.2.1):</i>	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	X
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating (optional): The quality and quantity of education for students attending classes regularly is excellent, but the opposite applies for the students that are parachute students.

The EEC did not try to and did not examine the quality of the undergraduate senior theses (ptychiakes). None the less, the EEC reminds all TEI departments of the need to ensure that international standards are adhered to in the style, formatting, and authorship criteria (e.g. proper referencing, no plagiarism, etc.).

3.2.2 Programmes of Postgraduate Studies (second cycle)

Postgraduate studies are still at their developmental stage. The first programs started around 2009 and have produced good quality theses and publications. Until recently, a number of the MSc programs were offered in collaboration with partner universities with independent or accredited programs. Most of the TEI staff that the EEC met is enthusiastically behind the efforts to start programs autonomously or independently of other institutions. While the autonomous programs provide concrete educational benefits, such as of rewarding the involved faculty and honing their skills in the full range of faculty responsibilities, the EEC cautions the Institution that should it establish autonomous degree programs, it might be called to function at a heightened level of services. Before it does so, TEI Crete also needs to promote and establish the appropriate culture, such as a TEI-wide full range of student and faculty capabilities. This might be especially necessary in order to be able to provide a smooth operation under the current severe limitations of resources and lack of consistent legislature support.

The EEC examined a few random MSc theses and observed that the quality of theses is not as consistent as those in first-class institutions offering such programs. Some theses included abstracts and conclusions, but others did not. Some were marked with a number grade, other were not marked so. Also, the grade differences in a couple of cases seemed quite compressed. The EEC urges the TEI to establish higher criteria in the preparation and evaluation of the MSs theses.

Finally, the EEC studied the numbers of graduate students entering the MSc programs, and the total number of the students registered in said programs. Even though a "steady state" has not been achieved yet, the EEC warns that the 2015 number of all the students registered in autonomous TEI MSc programs is 5 times the number of such graduating MSc students. This means that the drop out ratio is too high. This is akin to the problem of the registered vs. graduating students at the undergraduate level. While at the undergraduate level this is a manifestation of bad legislation at the ministry of education level, the TEI is fully responsible for controlling this ratio at its MSc programs. The EEC urges the TEI to closely monitor this ratio and immediately take steps to keep it under control. If not reduced, it will no doubt cause stress and most certainly disrupt TEI-wide operations and impact negatively the evaluation of the programs.

<i>Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (& 3.2.2):</i>	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	X
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating (optional): There should be consistent quality of work across programs.

3.2.3 Programmes of Doctoral Studies (third cycle)

TEIs typically do not offer Doctoral programs. In cooperation with other Ph.D. accredited institutions, TEI Crete makes it possible for its students to earn a Ph.D. in certain academic programs. In this regard, Ph.D. programs exist, but not independently so. There are indications that TEI Crete is working towards earning the right to create independent Ph.D. Programs.

The EEC recognizes that each department has undergone an internal and external evaluation and TEI Crete has already been benefitted from guidelines made by specific program evaluations. The evaluation reports for each department are available at ADIP's website:

<http://www.hqaa.gr/en/exteval-reports.php>

As general guidelines, the current EEC for the evaluation of the entire Institution would estimate that the strategy in establishing independent Ph.D. Programs must be deliberate, consistent and gradual, especially if the aim is to compete with established Ph.D. programs at the national and international level. Strict criteria must be established by the leadership of the Institution to guide the internal evaluation process. Programs that meet strict evaluation criteria, may be encouraged to proceed with their efforts, but programs that do not meet such strict criteria, must be discouraged.

<i>Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (& 3.2.3):</i>	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating (optional): Since TEI Crete does not offer independent Ph.D. programs, the EEC has not basis to mark a grade in this area of the report.

3.3 Profile of the Institution under evaluation - Conclusions and recommendations

*Please complete the following sections regarding the overall **profile of the Institution under evaluation**:*

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Underline specific positive points:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Favorable geographical and climatic conditions ideal for an academic setting with international outreach. Crete is indeed the center of the Universe, not China. 2. TEI Crete are blessed with a number of highly qualified academic faculty with internationally recognized research outputs 3. In general terms, there is a healthy underdog mentality to strive for improvement in research output and the institution appears to have a competitive status vis-à-vis other institutions. 4. The teaching faculty is readily available and does respond effectively to student request for out-of-class help. 5. There is a positive collegial presence that is evident throughout the Institution. The faculty have and are making the necessary sacrifices to meet the challenges posed by the economic crisis. 6. The participating students are proud of the institution and their role in it. 7. The Institutions has cultivated positive and constructive relations with the community. 8. The Institutions has established a strong alumni with loyalty to the Institution 9. Student services are generally effective specifically in areas of class registration 10. The internal evaluation process is effective. 11. TEI has even has a modest but commendable impact in distance areas.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Underline specific negative points:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Institution has submitted to the reality of the resistance of student participation in the internal evaluation process. This needs to be overcome despite student resistance. 2. There is need to develop a clear organizational chart of the administrative structure and to make its operations more efficient. 3. The Institution needs to resolve the inconsistencies in operations created by the dispersal of academic departments in different geographical areas. 4. The mission of the Institution should be stated concisely. 5. Student participation in the non-lab courses is low and there is a need to address and remedy this reality. 6. Institutional services in the area of housing should be improved. 7. Need to include the administrative staff in the internal evaluation process. 8. Need to increase participation in student course/teacher evaluations. The participation rate is low.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Make your suggestions for further development of the positive points:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a monitoring system designed to provide feedback and implement improvement in teaching. There is a need to integrate a quantitative metrics to monitor teaching effectiveness. 2. Need to find a way to include written comments in student evaluations when these made available to instructors. 3. Implement a more systematic cost-benefit analysis in the process of deciding to establish postgraduate degrees. 4. Need to enforce a flexible mechanism for the constant review of curriculum development to update it in relation to the market demands and to keep up with fast-paced changes in technology. 5. TEI should establish a process of exploiting its intellectual property
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Make your suggestions on needed steps for improvement:</i> The section of the negative points above, provide specific suggestions for improvement.

4. INTERNAL SYSTEM OF QUALITY ASSURANCE

4.1 Quality Assurance (QA) Policy and Strategy

The Institution has established a fully functioning quality assurance policy and strategy. This is evidence by the fact that the Institution has produced a detailed and comprehensive internal self-evaluation report. The Quality Assurance Unit of TEI (MODIP) oversees the evaluation process of the Institution while the establishment of Internal Evaluation Groups (IEGs/OMEAs) oversees the evaluation process of the departments. The Institution has been eager to develop the evaluation and has succeeded in doing so. It should take appropriate measures to expand the process to include the administrative staff as well. They too should be participating directly in the evaluation process.

<i>Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&4.1):</i>	Tick
Worthy of merit	X
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating (optional): The EEC is more than satisfied with the internal and external evaluation process.

4.2 Design, approval, monitoring and evaluation of the study programmes and degrees awarded

Each academic department has established a program of study which the schedule of classes follows closely. Students are required to register for those classes whose level of difficulty corresponds to their time in the major they are pursuing. Course offerings are made available in a specific sequence and students are required to follow this sequence. The great majority of courses are required course and the number of elective courses is limited. Learning outcomes are thus consistent and uniform and are ingrained in the course offerings for each department and academic program. Therefore, TEI Crete has in place departmental program of study committees which periodically examine the curriculum and make changes based on advances in technology, student needs, etc. These program changes are first ruminated at departmental meetings and transitioned over to the TEI level for final approval.

In accordance with the internal and external evaluation, each department undergoes curriculum revisions and updates.

The Erasmus program allows students to take initiative and pursue opportunities to well established international programs and use such experience as a step stone toward further advancement and subsequent career opportunities.

The undergraduate programs are stressed by an overwhelming number of entering students whose minimum qualifications are somewhat low and problematic to some of the direction, high goals and targets of the TEI. At the same time, the total number of registered undergraduate students is high. Efforts to improve the situation, aided by the legislation in past years of forcing a maximum duration of studies of v+2 years, were rescinded by officials of the latest government. Since efforts to improve the situation is hindered by legislation, no measurable improvement can be seen.

Students are required to participate in faculty and course evaluations across academic departments and the results are tabulated. They evaluate their courses but in insufficient numbers, overall. The TEI has instituted electronic ways of registering such course evaluations, but these are need of

improvements. For example, unlike multiple choice data, student written comments are not captured by the course evaluation system and such comments are not conveyed to the teaching professors. The EEC heard some complaints by students and recent graduates that even when verbal feedback was given to department heads about poor quality teaching by a specific professor, the department's reaction was ineffective and inadequate.

Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&4.2):

	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	X
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating (optional): The compilation of student evaluation results needs to be improved as well as the rate of student participation in the evaluation process.

4.3 Teaching and learning - Assessment by students

Overall, the students were pleased with the learning paths. They felt that their program of study fulfils their academic aspirations in virtually all departments. The vast majority of students the EEC met were extremely positive about the staff. One or two students made comments of the low availability of staff during busy periods of the year (registration time, examination time).

Many students reported “they are happy with the academic and professional level and facilities of the Institution.” This was especially the case in Heraklion. However students from “satellite campuses,” like the one in Sitia, put forward serious complaints about professors not making it to class. An effort should be made to restructure existing facilities along a line that facilitates self-sufficiency.

The Institution has put in place specific policies to resolve student complaints. There is also the office of the Student Ombudsman, which appears to be functional.

Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&4.3):

	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	X
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating (optional): Student feedback is not always translated into remedies regarding the sources of negative issues.

4.4 Admission of students, progression and recognition of studies

The admission of students to TEI Crete, as in the case with all other institutions, is determined by the process of national examination overseen by the Ministry of Education. The quality and number of students allocated to the TEI Crete is determined externally. Typically students with the lower passing grades are allocated to TEIs. Among these students, TEI Crete typically draws the better students as it is the students that select the destination TEI as their first preference among other TEIs.

For the second and third cycle of studies, the Institution does have the opportunity to set admission standards and the criteria, or at least their application, varies from one department to the next. Even at this level of studies, the process is determined by the Ministry. Only degrees from state-sponsored or public education are accepted at face value. All other degrees must carry the individual approval of the Ministry in order to be recognized. Therefore, the pool of applicants is pre-determined by the degree recognition process of the state. TEIs cannot admit students with degrees not already recognized by the state.

<i>Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&4.4):</i>		Tick
Worthy of merit		
Positive evaluation		X
Partially positive evaluation		
Negative evaluation		

Justify your rating (optional): The admission criteria are not always clear across the various departments.

4.5 Quality Assurance as regards the teaching staff

Opportunities offered to the teaching staff for professional/scientific advancement is taking place mainly through research-development programs. This is because currently there are no sufficient funds available in the budget for research and development.

TEI Crete strengthens and supports teachers in their scientific development through sabbaticals.

Generally faculty members are encouraged to improve their academic qualifications e.g. by offering opportunities in writing doctoral theses.

Furthermore, the Institution strongly encourages the participation of teaching staff in research programs, the formation of research groups, and research networks at the national and international level.

<i>Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&4.5):</i>		Tick
Worthy of merit		
Positive evaluation		X
Partially positive evaluation		
Negative evaluation		

Justify your rating (optional): The lack of financial resources seriously impedes the support to the teaching staff in order to strengthen the connection between education and research.

4.6 Learning resources and student support

Despite the fact that student services are performing at an effective level and perhaps because of it, there is no procedure put in place for the systematic monitoring, evaluation, and review of such services. This is an important issue that can easily be remedied if all academic services are included in the self-evaluation process.

Specific in relation to the library, it operates at a both effective and efficient level and its functions are completely satisfactory under the current political and economic circumstances.

<i>Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&4.6):</i>	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	X
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating (optional): Students services need to be fully automatized and fully consolidated.

4.7 Information Systems for Recording and Analysing Data and Indicators

The Institution possesses reliable means for collecting, analyzing and utilizing valid information in respect to key performance indicators, the profile of the student population and student progression, success and drop-out rates, as well as for collecting, analyzing and utilizing valid information regarding its other functions and activities.

The Institution does collect information about student satisfaction with their programmes of study and the career paths offered to graduates and it does seek to compare itself with other similar institutions within the European Higher Education Area, with a view to developing self-awareness and finding ways to improve its operation.

<i>Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&4.7):</i>	Tick
Worthy of merit	X
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating (optional): This area is one of the strong areas of the Institution.

4.8 Dissemination of information to stakeholders

The Institution's web site is using the latest technologies, tools and infrastructure. Overall, it is pleasant to the eye and comprehensive. However, its usability and functionality are inadequate. EEC attempts to locate specific course syllabi were difficult. The only way was through the course catalogue which contained the entire set of courses. There should be easier or multiple paths to this and each end.

It appears that the web site contains some of its pages in both Greek and English language. However, some Erasmus+ students reported that, while navigating the web site, they ended up in "Greek only" pages, missing some possibly vital information.

There are broken links on the web site as for example in this one:

<http://eed.stef.teicrete.gr/index.php/en/>

Often times, pages are missing altogether as in the case of the Nursing Department link, which displays the information in Greek, but when navigating to the English version, there emerges an empty template. Only the Internet sites of some programmes are available in English.

It is imperative that the web site be streamlined and made consistent in both its Greek and English versions.

CVs of academic staff members are not easy to find on the web site and, when they are found, they are available mostly in Greek.

Information regarding programme and course learning outcomes, as well as assessment procedures, is not easily accessible on the TEI's website.

Information regarding faculty bios are patchy or not available for all.

Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&4.8):

	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	X
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating (optional): The website, being the face of the Institution, should be the priority of the Institution.

4.9 Continuous monitoring and periodic review of the study programmes

All curricula of departments of TEI Crete have recorded per course learning objectives, learning outcomes and assessment methods. These are posted on the websites of each department.

The achievement of learning objectives is ensured through evaluation questionnaires/surveys. The involvement of students is guaranteed but their participation is still low.

The changing needs of society and the expectations, needs and satisfaction of students in the programs are reflected in revisions to the curriculum. Changing expectations are communicated to departments and faculties and interpreted by the Committee's Curriculum based on the various information available.

Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&4.9):

	Tick
Worthy of merit	X
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating (optional): This process overlaps with the operations of the internal and external evaluation process and is fully developed.

4.10 Periodic external evaluation

TEI Crete is to be commended for having internalized the positive impact of the external evaluation concept and for being enthusiastic to embrace it to its maximum potential in order to exploit opportunities for improvement. In particular, the EEC notes that, in some of the departmental presentations, recent actions taken to specifically address previous external evaluations were listed and individually presented. The EEC observed a near unanimous positive attitude toward external evaluations.

The EEC also urges ADIP to better streamline these external evaluations so that there is a better congruence between the data gathered by the MODIPs for the internal evaluations of the institutions and the data/metrics required/assessed by the EEC. This smoothing of the process will make it easier for all involved and will result in more efficient Institute visits with adequate time devoted to more meaningful subjects of concern and opportunities for improvement.

<i>Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&4.10):</i>	Tick
Worthy of merit	X
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating (optional): TEI Crete has been eager to adapt the evaluation process and has done so enthusiastically and with an open mind. The EEC has been more than pleasant with the cooperation, good will, and collegiality it enjoyed in the evaluation process.

4.11 Internal System of Quality Assurance – Conclusions and recommendations

Please complete the following sections regarding the internal system of quality assurance:

- *Underline specific positive points:*

For the sake of consistency, this section of the report will reference all of the conclusions and recommendations relative to the entire report:

1. Favorable geographical and climatic conditions ideal for an academic setting with international outreach. Crete is indeed the center of the Universe, not China.
2. TEI Crete are blessed with a number of highly qualified academic faculty with internationally recognized research outputs
3. In general terms, there is a healthy underdog mentality to strive for improvement in research output and the institution appears to have a competitive status vis-à-vis other institutions.
4. The teaching faculty is readily available and does respond effectively to student request for out-of-class help.
5. There is a positive collegial presence that is evident throughout the Institution. The faculty have and are making the necessary sacrifices to meet the challenges posed by the economic crisis.
6. The participating students are proud of the institution and their role in it.
7. The Institutions has cultivated positive and constructive relations with the community.
8. The Institutions has established a strong alumni with loyalty to the Institution

9.	Student services are generally effective specifically in areas of class registration
10.	The internal evaluation process is effective.
11.	TEI has even has a modest but commendable impact in distance areas.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Underline specific negative points:</i> 	
1.	The Institution has submitted to the reality of the resistance of student participation in the evaluation process.
2.	There is need to develop a clear organizational chart of the administrative structure and to make its operations more efficient.
3.	The Institution needs to resolve the inconsistencies in operations created by the dispersal of academic departments in different geographical areas.
4.	The mission of the Institution should be stated concisely.
5.	Student participation in the non-lab courses is low and there is a need to address and remedy this reality.
6.	Institutional services in the area of housing should be improved.
7.	Need to include the administrative staff in the internal evaluation process.
8.	Need to increase participation in student evaluations. The participation rate is low
<p><i>Make your suggestions for further development of the positive points:</i></p>	
1.	Develop a monitoring system designed to provide feedback and implement improvement in teaching. There is a need to integrate a quantitative metrics to monitor teaching effectiveness.
2.	Need to find a way to include written comments in student evaluations when these made available to instructors.
3.	Implement a more systematic cost-benefit analysis in the process of deciding to establish postgraduate degrees.
4.	Need to enforce a flexible mechanism for the constant review of curriculum development to update it in relation to the market demands and to keep up with fast-paced changes in technology.
5.	TEI should establish a process of exploiting its intellectual property.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Make your suggestions on needed steps for improvement:</i> • <p>The section of the negative points above, provide specific suggestions for improvement.</p>	

5. OPERATION OF THE CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE INSTITUTION

5.1 Central Administration Services of the Institution

The operation of the central administration services of the Institution in regard to the:

Special Account for Research Funds (SARF): The impression of EEC members is that this fund functions appropriately.

Financial services: Adequate.

Supplies department: Adequate.

Technical services: Adequate.

IT services: Adequate.

Student support services: Adequate.

Employment and Career Centre (ECC): Its Activity restricted to the placement of students in practicum/internships

Public/ International relations department: Adequate.

Foreign language services: Not existing as a separate unit. Establishment of a centre of foreign languages is recommended.

Social and cultural activities: Sport events, festivities and humanitarian acts are constantly available and the Institution does a good job of promoting educational and scientific work produced in the Institution in the form of 'open-day' events.

Halls of residence and refectory services: The EEC did not get the chance to visit the halls of residence. Some of the students stay at local hotels with support from the institution

Institution's library: Very good. The EEC recognizes the logistical dilemmas associated with the availability of e-books, but it all the same notes that the availability of e-books is strongly recommended.

<i>Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&5.1):</i>	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	X
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating (optional): Some areas are more developed than others.

5.2 Operation of the Central Administration of the Institution – Conclusions and recommendations

Please complete the following sections regarding the operation of the Institution's central administration :

- *Underline specific positive points:*

At Faculty and Department levels, the internal system for quality assurance is uninterrupted and takes place frequently, and the results are included in the planning of future actions.

- *Underline specific negative points:*

In the assessment groups only members of the teaching staff participate.

- *Make your suggestions for further development of the positive points:*

Create surveys designed to estimate the degree of work satisfaction and level of contribution to the Institution by the administrative staff.

- *Make your suggestions on needed steps for improvement:*

The EEC recommends that students and non-academic staff be included in the internal evaluation assessment system. A central authority/committee that monitors the professional development of alumni would be very helpful.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In connection with the

- general operation of the Institution
- development of the Institution to this date and its present situation
- Institution's readiness and capability to change/improve
- Internal system of Quality Assurance of the Institution

please complete the following sections:

- *Underline specific positive points:*

1. Favourable geographical and climatic conditions ideal for an academic setting with international outreach.
2. TEI Crete is blessed with a number of highly qualified academic faculty with internationally recognized research outputs
3. In general terms, there is a healthy underdog mentality to strive for improvement in research output and the institution appears to have a competitive status vis-à-vis other institutions.
4. The teaching faculty is readily available and does respond effectively to student request for out-of-class help.
5. There is a positive collegial presence that is evident throughout the Institution. The faculty have and are making the necessary sacrifices to meet the challenges posed by the economic crisis.
6. The participating students are proud of the institution and their role in it.
7. The Institutions has cultivated positive and constructive relations with the community.
8. The Institutions has established a strong alumni with loyalty to the Institution
9. Student services are generally effective specifically in areas of class registration
10. The internal evaluation process is effective.
11. TEI has even has a modest but commendable impact in distance areas.
12. TEI Crete believes in the necessity and benefits of internal and external evaluations as catalysts for continual and real institutional improvement.
13. There is a significant portion of TEI staff that is eager to work hard and achieve internationally accepted levels of performance.
14. The TEI is exceptionally well integrated with its region's stakeholders. Its graduates occupy respectable positions in the region's society and function productively in concert with TEI's mission.
15. TEI Crete offers well attended seminars and other informational and cultural activities for continuing education (διά βίου μάθηση) and the overall betterment of the region.
16. Some of the TEI's research has started impacting the international community and this promises a bright future, if carefully increased and maintained for long term consistency.

- *Underline specific negative points:*

1. The Institution has submitted to the reality of the resistance of student participation in the evaluation process.
2. There is need to develop a clear organizational chart of the administrative structure and to make its operations more efficient.
3. The Institution needs to resolve the inconsistencies in operations created by the dispersal of academic departments in different geographical areas.
4. The mission of the Institution should be stated concisely.

<p>5.</p> <p>6.</p> <p>7.</p> <p>8.</p> <p>9.</p> <p>10.</p> <p>11.</p> <p>12.</p>	<p>Student participation in the non-lab courses is low and there is a need to address and remedy this reality.</p> <p>Institutional services in the area of housing should be improved.</p> <p>Need to include the administrative staff in the internal evaluation process.</p> <p>Need to increase participation in student evaluations. The participation rate is low.</p> <p>The TEI student body and faculty needs to further develop the "culture" required to support higher levels of educational performance. The TEI property and the campus grounds are not adequately "respected" by their inhabitants. The EEC observed a nonqualified vehicle occupying a handicapped parking space, albeit momentarily, even though regular empty spaces existed a few steps away. Strict adherence to norms is a way of life that the TEI could promote so that, by example and by osmosis, it could improve its graduates, their opportunities, their competitiveness and the society at large.</p> <p>In terms of the constrains in which TEI Crete is operating, the EEC also points out that:</p> <p>TEI Crete is not an independent institution. Like all educational institutions in Greece, it is being overly regulated by the Ministry of Education. This makes it difficult for the TEI to be flexible and agile to make decisions based on its specific circumstances and environment. As an example, the TEI is not allowed to autonomously determine the number and minimum qualifying criteria of its entering students. Therefore, the TEI cannot adjust to diminishing budgets in order to control teacher to student ratios and assure quality.</p> <p>The TEI's graduates have traditionally been subject to a lower level of professional certification. For example, Electrical Engineering TEI graduates do not have the ability to certify design plans for projects of power above a certain level. While this may be fully justified based on the rigor of the programs of study and other metrics, there does not appear to be a comprehensive framework. In some professions, the certification levels are too old and need to be updated. At the present time, students and recent graduates operate in an environment made vague with rumours and semi-official announcements of impending changes.</p> <p>The result of the adverse conditions mentioned in the previous paragraph, perpetuates serious quality challenges. The range of student qualifications and their academic commitment varies. This contributes to friction among the faculty in terms of perceived and real disproportional educational burden and rewards just because it is not easy to determine whether to focus on the low-end of the spectrum or the high-end. The overproduction of degrees results in a large portion of TEI graduates working in industries unrelated to their subjects of study. This is, in part, related to the economic hardship of the last several years. The TEI is tracking this metric, even though it is not able to affect it immediately.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Make your suggestions for further development of the positive points:</i> <p>1.</p> <p>2.</p> <p>3.</p> <p>4.</p> <p>5.</p>	<p>Develop a monitoring system designed to provide feedback and implement improvement in teaching. There is a need to integrate a quantitative metrics to monitor teaching effectiveness.</p> <p>Need to find a way to include written comments in student evaluations when these are made available to instructors.</p> <p>Implement a more systematic cost-benefit analysis in the process of deciding to establish postgraduate degrees.</p> <p>Need to enforce a flexible mechanism for the constant review of curriculum development to update it in relation to the market demands and to keep up with fast-paced changes in technology.</p> <p>TEI Crete should establish a process of exploiting its intellectual property.</p>

6.1 Final decision of the EEC

Please decide in respect to the overall Institutional evaluation:

	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	X
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating (optional): Out of 26 applicable items, the EEC graded **nine** as “Worthy of Merit,” **14** as “Positive Evaluation,” and **only three** as “Partially Positive.”

The Members of the Committee**TECHNOLOGICAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE
OF CRETE**

Name and Surname

Signature

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Salve Regina University, USA

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