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ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΣΤΗΝ ΑΝΩΤΑΤΗ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗ

HELLENIC REPUBLIC

H.Q.A.

HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE  
AND ACCREDITATION AGENCY

## EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY EDUCATION  
UNIVERSITY OF THE AEGEAN

September 2013



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

### **The External Evaluation Committee**

#### **Introduction**

##### I. The External Evaluation Procedure

- Brief account of documents examined, of the Site Visit, meetings and facilities visited.

##### II. The Internal Evaluation Procedure

- Comments on the quality and completeness of the documentation provided and on the overall acceptance of and participation in the Quality Assurance procedures by the Department.

#### **A. Curriculum**

##### APPROACH

- Goals and objectives of the Curriculum, structure and content, intended learning outcomes.

##### IMPLEMENTATION

- Rationality, functionality, effectiveness of the Curriculum.

##### RESULTS

- Maximizing success and dealing with potential inhibiting factors.

##### IMPROVEMENT

- Planned improvements.

#### **B. Teaching**

##### APPROACH:

- Pedagogic policy and methodology, means and resources.

##### IMPLEMENTATION

- Quality and evaluation of teaching procedures, teaching materials and resources, mobility.

##### RESULTS

- Efficacy of teaching, understanding of positive or negative results.

##### IMPROVEMENT

- Proposed methods for improvement.

#### **C. Research**

##### APPROACH

- Research policy and main objectives.

##### IMPLEMENTATION

- Research promotion and assessment, quality of support and infrastructure.

##### RESULTS

- Research projects and collaborations, scientific publications and applied results.

##### IMPROVEMENT

- Proposed initiatives aiming at improvement.

#### **D. All Other Services**

##### APPROACH

- Quality and effectiveness of services provided by the Department.

##### IMPLEMENTATION

- Organization and infrastructure of the Department's administration (e.g. secretariat of the Department).

##### RESULTS

- Adequateness and functionality of administrative and other services.

##### IMPROVEMENTS

- Proposed initiatives aiming at improvement.

##### **Collaboration with social, cultural and production organizations**

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

- Short-, medium- and long-term goals and plans of action proposed by the Department.

***F. Final Conclusions and recommendations of the EEC on:***

- The development and present situation of the Department, good practices and weaknesses identified through the External Evaluation process, recommendations for improvement.

### **External Evaluation Committee**

The Committee responsible for the External Evaluation of the Department of Primary Education of the University of the Aegean (Rhodes) consisted of the following three (3) expert evaluators drawn from the Registry constituted by the HQA in accordance with Law 3374/2005:

1. Professor George Philippou (Coordinator)  
University of Nicosia, Cyprus
  
2. Dr Martha Apostolidou  
Associate Professor, Frederick University, Nicosia, Cyprus
  
3. Dr Leonidas Kyriakides  
Associate Professor, University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus

**N.B.** The structure of the “Template” proposed for the External Evaluation Report mirrors the requirements of Law 3374/2005 and corresponds overall to the structure of the Internal Evaluation Report submitted by the Department.

The length of text in each box is free. Questions included in each box are not exclusive nor should they always be answered separately; they are meant to provide a general outline of matters that should be addressed by the Committee when formulating its comments.

## **Introduction**

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) welcomed the opportunity to participate in this important evaluation instigated by the Ministry of Education of the Government of Greece. The EEC was warmly received by the Vice-rector of the University of the Aegean (UoA), faculty, and staff of the Department of Primary Education (DPE) of the UoA who went out of their way to facilitate the efficient functioning of the EEC. The DPE contributed whole-heartedly to the evaluation process with professionalism, honesty and enthusiasm. The EEC felt well equipped to address the tasks assigned by the H.Q.A. and was able to complete the review effectively. The conclusions described below were reached unanimously.

### **Description of the Primary Education Department**

The DPE is comprised of 7 Professors, 6 Associate Professors, 4 Assistant Professors and 5 lecturers. The Bachelor’s program at DPE of the UoA is comprised of 8 semesters of theoretical and practical study. The DPE accepts approximately 240 students into its undergraduate program each year and has approximately 850 undergraduate students currently enrolled across the 8 semesters of the program.

Since the academic year 2004-2005, the DPE offers a postgraduate program entitled “Educational Sciences – Use of New Technologies in Education”. The main aim of the course is to provide deep understanding of the use of technologies in education and develop research skills in this field. For this master’s degree, student applicants are drawn from graduates of departments of education as well as graduates of subjects related to education and technology. This is a three semester long program requiring the completion of 90 ECTS (including the master thesis). The program attracts about 25 students per year. Moreover, the department provides a PhD program. Currently, the total number of PhD candidates is approximately 45.

Throughout this report we limit our discussion to the activities at the bachelor’s level, as it forms the bulk of the Department’s effort. We only briefly refer to the Master and PhD program towards the end of this report.

#### **I. The External Evaluation Procedure**

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

- Groups of teaching and administrative staff and students interviewed
- Facilities visited by the External Evaluation Committee.

**The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) has visited the:**

1. Hellenic Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (HQAHE) (16/9/2013),
2. main campus of the School of Humanities of the UoA (17/9/2013),
3. library of the School of Humanities (17/9/2013),
4. cafeteria of the School of Humanities (17/9/2013),
5. restaurant of the School of Humanities (17/9/2013),
6. computer labs of the DPE (17/9/2013),
7. science education lab of the DPE (17/9/2013),
8. gym and theatre room of the DP (17/9/2013)
9. new building of the DPE (Kleovoulos Building) (18/9/2013), and
10. the Town Hall (having a meeting with the mayor and representatives of social, cultural and production organizations) (18/9/2013)

**The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) has met:**

1. the Chair and the Director of the Hellenic Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
2. the Vice Rector of academic affairs of the University of the Aegean (UoA)
3. the academic staff of the DPE (the Internal Evaluation Group, the elected academic and scientific staff)
4. a group of undergraduate students of the DPE
5. a group of postgraduate and PhD students of the DPE
6. the administrative and secretariat staff of the DPE
7. the library staff of the School of Humanities
8. the Director of the postgraduate program
9. a group of graduates from both the Bachelor and the Master program of DPE
10. head-teachers of experimental schools
11. the school advisor of primary education
12. the mayor of Rhodes, and
13. representatives of social, cultural and productive organizations of Rhodes that cooperate with the DPE.

**The reports and the documents provided by the (HQAHE) and the DPE that have been reviewed by the EEC comprise the following:**

1. External Evaluation of Higher Education Academic Units Guidelines for Members of External Evaluation Committees (March 2012)

2. The Internal Evaluation Reports (IER) of the DPE for the academic years 2009-2010, 2010-2011 and 2011-2012
3. The programs of undergraduate studies for the last five academic years
4. The program of postgraduate studies
5. The Guidelines for the Master Dissertation
6. The Guide for teaching practice (including the observation and evaluation instruments)
7. The Curriculum Vitae of the Faculty members of the DPE
8. A list of recent publications by the Faculty members of the DPE
9. A list of research programs (since 2006) run by the Faculty of the DPE
10. Representative Publications by the Faculty members of the DPE
11. Course evaluation student-questionnaire
12. Samples of final exams
13. Samples of undergraduate, postgraduate and PhD thesis
14. Protocols for teaching practice
15. Protocols for the collaboration of the DPE with various social organizations

**The groups of teaching and administrative staff and students interviewed by the EEC comprised the following:**

1. the Academic staff of the DPE (the Internal Evaluation Group, the elected academic staff, on-contract academic staff (PD 407), scientific staff, and seconded staff)
2. laboratory associates from the DPE
3. special technical staff members
4. a group of undergraduate Students of the DPE
6. a group of postgraduate students of the DPE
7. a group of PhD candidates
8. a group of administrative / secretarial staff of the DPE
9. a group of graduates from both the Bachelor and the Master degree.

The atmosphere during the site visits and meetings was collegial and receptive, while remaining on a professional level. Faculty members were very friendly and they facilitated the EEC's work by establishing a constructive dialogue and providing information and data, wherever possible. The EEC particularly enjoyed the constructive meeting with DPE students and the graduates of DPE.

## II. The Internal Evaluation Procedure

Please comment on:

- Appropriateness of sources and documentation used
- Quality and completeness of evidence reviewed and provided
- To what extent have the objectives of the internal evaluation process been met by the Department?

The DPE provided documentation that was of good quality; it was adequate and the evidence was up to date and fully informative for the EEC. The objectives of the H.Q.A. internal evaluation were met by the DPE and the EEC recognizes that a great effort was put into the process. In particular, the EEC would like to acknowledge the very good work and the challenges involved in preparing the web site with the list of documents and power point presentations to be used by the EEC (see <http://www.pre.aegean.gr/evaluation/default.aspx>).

## **A. Curriculum**

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

### APPROACH

- What are the goals and objectives of the Curriculum? What is the plan for achieving them?
- How were the objectives decided? Which factors were taken into account? Were they set against appropriate standards? Did the unit consult other stakeholders?
- Is the curriculum consistent with the objectives of the Curriculum and the requirements of the society?
- How was the curriculum decided? Were all constituents of the Department, including students and other stakeholders, consulted?
- Has the unit set a procedure for the revision of the curriculum?

### Undergraduate curriculum

The goals and the objectives of the current undergraduate Curriculum:

1. are stated in the IER of the DPE
2. are adequate for a Bachelor Degree in Primary Education
3. prepare students to become professional primary teachers in contemporary multicultural society
4. provide graduates with the academic background necessary for postgraduate studies.

In general, the curriculum is consistent with European standards for teacher education. It also responds to the demands of multicultural education and the use of technologies in education. However, it does not fully cover the need for an in-depth understanding of contemporary theories of effective teaching that address generic and domain specific skills (especially in the core subjects of Language and Mathematics). The DPE has adopted the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). The EEC observed, however, that the program of study is overloaded with courses resulting in allocation of a relatively small number of ECTS per course (particularly to elective courses).

The curriculum has been structured to respond to the DPE objectives, and is organized around four main academic areas:

- a) Psychology and Pedagogical Sciences
- b) Social and Humanitarian Studies and their didactics
- c) Math, Sciences, New Technologies and their didactics
- d) Greek Language, Literature, Folkloric studies and their didactics



Each area is allocated about 6 compulsory courses equivalent to 10% of the total required number of ECTS units (i.e., 24 ECTS). Each student should also take about 5 elective courses from each of these areas corresponding to about 16 ECTS units. Therefore, each student is expected to complete approximately 44 courses (i.e., 160 ECTS units) from the above four areas.

In addition, students have to take three foreign language courses (6 ECTS units) and three specific art courses (12 ECTS).

Finally, students go through three phases of teaching practice equivalent to 50 ECTS units. During these phases, students have the opportunity to develop their teaching skills through observing and providing a number of lessons to primary students. In addition, students are placed in several social, cultural and productive organizations to get experience in providing education in different settings (e.g., museums, old people's homes, institutions for children with special needs). This area of the curriculum is effectively linked with the job market through well-organized teaching training and other activities.

The EEC has also observed that multiple and transparent methods of evaluating students are used. It is also pointed out that there is a satisfactory structure and organization of teaching and learning material in the DPE.

However, the EEC is concerned about the overwhelming number of courses required for graduation (n=67) and the fact that students are not expected to attend courses in educational research methodology which could contribute to the promotion of interdisciplinary research activities within the four main areas of the curriculum. Moreover, subjects such as curriculum development, educational management, health education and comparative education are missing from the program. These subjects are usually included in most curricula in departments of education around the world.

Both internal and external factors have influenced the development of the objectives and the curriculum development by the DPE. However, financial restrictions and regulations imposed by the Ministry of Education impede the ability of the DPE to design and implement a more balanced curriculum. Updating of the objectives and suggestions for improvement of the program of study are acknowledged as included in the IER of DPE.

The EEC believes that the curriculum objectives are consistent. Yet, responsiveness to some social issues (e.g. sex education, child abuse, school bullying, and gender issues) is not evident. The DPE has established a committee for the evaluation and the revision of the curriculum (undertaken every year). However, student participation in curriculum development is not adequately encouraged.

#### IMPLEMENTATION

- How effectively is the Department's goal implemented by the curriculum?
- How does the curriculum compare with appropriate, universally accepted standards for the specific area of study?
- Is the structure of the curriculum rational and clearly articulated?
- Is the curriculum coherent and functional?

- Is the material for each course appropriate and the time offered sufficient?
- Does the Department have the necessary resources and appropriately qualified and trained staff to implement the curriculum?

The DPE's goals are implemented effectively by the curriculum. The curriculum is rational, clearly articulated and its structure is functional. It combines theory and practice well. However, the DPE gives less emphasis to pedagogy and didactics of core subjects than that given in most other universities. Given that most graduates of this program are expected to work as primary teachers, more courses in these areas should be provided.

Human, material and space resources are not always adequate. The EEC observed that the academic and scientific personnel is adequately qualified, but the number of courses and the student-teacher ratio requires additional staff, especially in areas that are not well covered. The science and computer labs are very small and it is, therefore, not always possible to serve the needs of students. However, the faculty tries very hard to respond to these needs by working extra hours to support large numbers of students. The internet connection is of high quality but there is a noticeable lack of up-to-date equipment for the computer labs. Although students are encouraged to use every day material and used material for their experiments, more resources are also needed in the science lab.

#### RESULTS

- How well is the implementation achieving the Department's predefined goals and objectives?
- If not, why is it so? How is this problem dealt with?
- Does the Department understand why and how it achieved or failed to achieve these results?

There is a good alignment between the predefined goals and objectives of the curriculum and its subsequent implementation. The hard work of the faculty members of the DPE to achieve the aims and objectives of the curriculum under difficult circumstances is evident.

#### IMPROVEMENT

- Does the Department know how the Curriculum should be improved?
- Which improvements does the Department plan to introduce?

Several areas of the curriculum that need to be improved have been both stated in the IER and identified during the meetings with the faculty members of the DPE. The EEC observed that most courses are seen as equivalent to no more than 4 ECTS units while in most universities undergraduate courses offered three-hours weekly are equivalent to at least 5 ECTS. As a consequence, students are required to attend a large number of courses and the faculty to offer more courses than actually required. It is, therefore, recommended that the DPE reconsiders the workload of each course and aligns it with the allocation of ECTS per course. Moreover, the EEC suggests that the curriculum should be enriched in terms of the core subjects and their didactics.

Emphasis should be given to provide research methodology courses to help students develop research skills, thus, catering to developing a teacher – researcher.

In addition, the EEC recommends that the DPE should structure the program of study by semester in such a way that it becomes evident which courses are prerequisites of others. In this direction, the effective functioning of the academic advisor practice will help students in selecting their courses and dealing more effectively with the demands of each course.

## ***B. Teaching***

### APPROACH:

- Does the Department have a defined pedagogic policy with regard to teaching approach and methodology?

The DPE has done a lot of work to create and advance a strong set of academic teaching policies and methodologies. This is evident from the IER, its formal and informal curricula and the discussions the EEC had with faculty members and undergraduate and postgraduate students. The results of these policies culminate in the production of graduates with a high level of theory and practice abilities that are adequately prepared for ongoing postgraduate studies and are well-equipped to work as primary teachers. This is supported by the successful participation of graduate students in the master's and PhD program of the DPE as well as in other universities in Greece and abroad.

Please comment on :

- Teaching methods used

The IER indicates that various methods of teaching are used in theoretical and practical courses of the DPE including lectures, discussions, interactive workshops and skills acquisition. This variety of methodologies appears to cover learning objectives in all domains (cognitive, psychomotor, and affective). It is noted with great concern that the DPE student attendance is not compulsory due to the legislation enacted. This is a significant issue in a program such as primary education where students are learning to become responsible, autonomous professionals aiming to contribute to the cognitive, social and affective development of children.

- Teaching staff/student ratio

The IER identified an academic staff/student ratio of about 1:37. This ratio goes down to 1:29 when on-contract academic staff (i.e., PD 407) is taken into account. In theoretical modules, the average classroom size is estimated to be 1:60. Moreover, the EEC observed that a very large number of students (more than 100) are enrolled in certain theoretical courses. This is due to the fact that there is no systematic control of student registration in the courses offered by the DPE

each semester. We recommend that a maximum number of student per-course is established. The practice of academic advisor will contribute towards this direction. With respect to courses offered in laboratories, the classroom ratio should not be more than 1:25 for quality teaching and learning purposes.

- Teacher/student collaboration

The teaching staff of the DPE is available to students before, during, and after each semester. Students and graduates of the DPE affirmed the willingness of the faculty staff to support them in their learning and in encouraging them to undertake further studies at graduate level. It was evident in meetings with the students that there is an excellent and respectful relationship between them and the faculty members, which creates an effective learning environment in the DPE.

- Adequacy of means and resources

The DPE functions very well under very difficult circumstances. The teaching rooms are not all digitally equipped and comprise inflexible seating arrangements which do not enable effective group work. There is no easy access for disabled individuals. Office accommodation at present is inadequate and the staff and students deserve much better. The EEC had the chance to visit the renovated building of the School of Humanities which will be ready for use in the next couple of months. This will significantly contribute to the improvement of the working conditions of the DPE.

- Use of information technologies

Students have access to the internet throughout the campus. They also have access to papers in international journals through the Hellas-Link database. The EEC would also like to comment on the existence of a lab with teleconference facilities used for education purposes and administrative reasons (e.g., for electoral bodies). However, there is no systematic use of an electronic/digital platform for eLearning and study skills support. This could enable flexible and interactive group learning. The DPE Web site needs to be further developed and updated with all the faculty CVs, research interests, and course descriptions. An English short version of the Web site of the DPE with the mission of the department and the research interests and CVs of the faculty members should be developed. This version may contribute to the establishment of international research collaborations. Finally, the EEC notes the lack of use of information technologies for administrative purposes such as the announcement of the program of study, the final exam timetables and the final exam results.

- System of written exams

Students are assessed through written exam at the end of each course at the end of the semester,

as required by the Greek legislation. This appears to be managed equitably and effectively. However, the EEC observed that in certain papers most test items focused on recalling information and presenting factual knowledge rather than critically evaluating the theories presented to them and using them for problem solving and reasoning. Some courses are assessed through various techniques including writing essays and completing reflective diaries.

The teaching practice is evaluated by asking students to assess their own teaching practice through completing questionnaires and reflective diaries. During the interviews with students and graduates of the DPE it was mentioned that constructive feedback to students is not always provided and that the announcement of examination results is often delayed. For quality learning, the EEC recommends that students should be evaluated with diverse and ongoing assessment methods and should receive corresponding feedback.

## IMPLEMENTATION

- Quality of teaching procedures

As previously mentioned, the DPE students have reported to be satisfied with the teaching procedures to which they have been exposed.

- Quality and adequacy of teaching materials and resources.

The EEC visited the library of the School of Humanities which appears to be an adequate resource. The EEC also reviewed textbooks and teaching materials used in courses and found them to be relevant and appropriate. Overall, the students reported that they were satisfied with the use of the existing electronic literature databases as available and their access to printers that enable them to print learning materials, such as research articles. However, enriching the library with more up to date teaching materials, books and journals and developing on line facilities for the faculty staff and students is highly recommended. Students reported that there is a need to update the quality of the computers and the software in the labs.

- Linking of research with teaching

The EEC observed that the faculty staff of DPE somehow applies research findings in teaching and learning and affirms the importance of linking research and practice for improving the quality of education.

- Mobility of academic staff and students

The DPE values European exchange programmes such as ERASMUS which provide important

opportunities for both staff and student exchanges. However, the student participation in such programs is very poor. It is also noted that participation in international and national conferences is not financially supported. However, quite a few faculty members attend such conferences on their own expenses. The EEC strongly believes that students should be encouraged to participate in the ERASMUS program as this will enrich their experiences and help them further develop. Moreover, the faculty as well as PhD students should be financially supported to present their research findings in international conferences, something that will give them the opportunity to receive feedback and improve the quality of their work. In this way, research collaboration with other universities and colleagues can also be developed.

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

A common student questionnaire is used to evaluate the quality of each course and the teaching and academic staff. Students are expected to complete the electronic version of the questionnaire. However, the response rates are very low. Nevertheless, feedback with results emerged from a statistical analysis of this survey are provided to the faculty members. The EEC strongly believes that staff evaluation is of great importance and the DPE should find the means to encourage students participate in this process.

## RESULTS

- Efficacy of teaching

The EEC believes that the teaching staff of the DPE is effective. This was documented statistically in the IER-based evaluative surveys of courses and staff, and was confirmed by the DPE students during the interviews. The goals and objectives of the curriculum are met both through carefully constructed formal and informal curricula. The formal curriculum is described in the IER. Furthermore, extra-curricular activities are offered to students. For example, students are encouraged to do volunteer work in the community as mentioned during the interviews with the social, cultural and productive representatives, the students of DPE and the faculty members. Thus, the informal curriculum includes the invaluable ongoing voluntary contribution of students (who are perspective primary teachers) to the community which creates a strong relationship between the DPE and the community. It is also expected that graduates of DPE will be able to promote this attitude to their pupils in primary schools.

In regard to the student learning outcomes, for the last three years the mean value of students' grades was above 7.6. This might be seen as an indicator of the effectiveness of the teaching provided to students of DPE. It could also be an indication for the need of faculty members to increase their expectations from students. For example, they may increase the degree of difficulty of their final exams by including more items measuring creative and critical thinking. In addition the

EEC recommends more systematic use of multiple techniques of assessment.

- Discrepancies in the success/failure percentages between courses and how they are justified

Based on the figures given in the web site of the DPE, the EEC noticed that in some courses the number of students registered is very large (even more than 300). At the same time, a relatively small percentage of registered students (around 60%) enrolled for the final exam. Furthermore, the EEC observed discrepancies in the mean grades (based on those who participated in the exams) between courses (ranging from about 2.0 to more than 9.2).

- Differences between students and the time to graduation and final degree grades

The minimum time required for degree completion is 4 years and this is held by the vast majority of the students. Specifically, as indicated in the IER, 93% of the students need less than 10 semesters to graduate. The number of DPE students graduating after excessive years of studies is decreasing. To some extent this can be attributed to the efforts of the DPE.

- Whether the DPE understands the reasons of such positive and negative results

The faculty of the DPE believes that students strive to graduate on time due to the fact that studying in Rhodes is quite expensive and their financial situation does not allow them to stay longer at the DPE. The DPE has also worked hard to improve student success and effective completion.

#### IMPROVEMENT

- Does the Department propose methods and ways for improvement?

The IER indicates that teaching at the DPE can be improved through taking actions to improve the facilities and resources of the DPE. Specifically, enrichment of the library will contribute to the improvement of teaching resources and aids available to students. Moreover, in the IER it is noted that improvement of computer labs and technical-electronic facilities is necessary for quality teaching. The DPE also acknowledges the need to progress an electronic learning and a learning support platform. This will provide students with greater flexibility in their learning and could improve student participation in theory learning.

- What initiatives does it take in this direction?

The DPE is continuously demanding the upgrade of teaching facilities and resources mentioned above. However, financial constraints do not always allow the UoA to provide these facilities to the

DPE. Nevertheless, the faculty of the DPE mentioned that they are expecting the upgrading of teleconferencing facilities in the near future.

### **C. Research**

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

#### APPROACH

- What is the Department's policy and main objective in research?

The Department's policy for research reveals three main ways of supporting faculty members to undertake projects. First, faculty members are supported to establish research labs and work in groups to develop research proposals in their areas of interest. At the moment, the DPE has five research labs. Second, the DPE encourages faculty members to participate in research projects and provides support to academic members to develop their research proposals (e.g. budget development of the proposal). Third, the DPE supports the organisation of international and national conferences in Rhodes. Although the EEC observed that the faculty members work closely together in research projects, the main objectives for research seem to be individualized especially since the policy of DPE does not specifically refer to the objectives of research and the areas that need to be covered.

- Has the Department set internal standards for assessing research?

The EEC did not scrutinise any internal standards, described through collective agreement/action for assessing either the quality of research projects or their alignment with improving the quality of education.

#### IMPLEMENTATION

- How does the Department promote and support research?
- Quality and adequacy of research infrastructure and support.
- Scientific publications.
- Research projects.
- Research collaborations.

The DPE promotes and supports research among students through offering research methodology classes throughout the curriculum. In the IER, it is mentioned that 50 students are currently involved in research projects of the faculty members.

As already mentioned, the DPE faculty does not receive any financial support to participate in national and international conferences. However, the great majority of the faculty participate in



conferences on their own expenses.

It is important to note that there are currently more than 40 PhD candidates in the DPE. The EEC believes that PhD students should receive financial support to present their papers in international conferences and receive feedback in order to improve the quality of their studies.

## RESULTS

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

The IER provides a list of research projects and publications of the faculty members of the DPE. During the last academic year, the faculty members of DPE published a significant number of books/monographs (3), papers in journals with referee system (12), chapters in books (21), and papers in conference-proceedings (20). This implies that the DPE encourages research and supports its faculty members to publish their work. From the list of publication, it also appears that most of them are in Greek (i.e., 35 out of 56). Moreover, it appears that there is collaboration among faculty members in publishing results of their research projects in journals. The EEC recommends that publications in international journals with peer review system should be given higher priority as it will contribute to the establishment of international collaborations.

The EEC recommends that publications in international journals with peer review system should be given higher priority as it will contribute to the establishment of international collaborations.

Some information about citations of the faculty publications is also provided. For example, it is mentioned that faculty publications were cited approximately 50 times during the academic year 2011-2012. It is, however, not clear where these 50 citations come from. It would have been helpful if the citation record of academic members of DPE was provided in the web of science and/or other databanks. In the IER, it is acknowledged that the DPE does not collect information on the citation records of each academic (see section 4.5) something that the EEC considers as essential.

From the list of research projects provided in the IER it is noted that the faculty members participate in a large number of projects. However, the total budget of these projects is relatively small. This could be attributed to the fact that most projects are concerned with the provision of in-service training and in developing educational material. These projects also attempt to make use of information technology for training reasons. The EEC believes that more emphasis should be given to basic research that can have a significant contribution to the theory development and testing and

to the upgrading of the research status of the DPE.

The EEC observed that the Department's research objectives are achieved to a great extent. The research of the DPE is both acknowledged and made visible outside the DPE through scientific publications, conference presentations, and professional meetings and through the departmental website. As has been noted above, however, international dissemination of research findings should be encouraged.

No external research awards were noted for distinctions of the DPE.

#### IMPROVEMENT

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

The EEC agrees with the improvements in research proposed by the DPE and corresponding initiatives that are described in the IER and are well structured (see sections 4.3 and 10).

### ***D. All Other Services***

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

#### APPROACH

- How does the Department view the various services provided to the members of the academic community (teaching staff, students).
- Does the Department have a policy to simplify administrative procedures? Are most procedures processed electronically?
- Does the Department have a policy to increase student presence on Campus?

The DPE uses the available institutional resources in an effective way. According to the IER, the EEC's observations and the comments of the students and the academic staff **not** all the facilities of DPE (e.g. offices, classrooms, laboratories, meeting rooms, and library) are adequate. The DPE is very concerned about the lack of space for students, staff and infrastructure, and the EEC shares this concern. The permanent academic staff as well as the instructors lack of private office space and share the same space with other persons. Furthermore, the DPE does not have a reading/quiet study room. The EEC acknowledges the urgent need for office space for academic and administrative staff.

Administrative procedures have been simplified recently but more actions should be taken in order to encourage academic and administrative staff to make systematic use of information technology (e.g., electronic student registration, announcement of exam results, staff minutes).

Attendance during teaching practice is compulsory. However, attendance of all other courses is not compulsory and no attendance records are kept. The staff of the DPE recognizes that low student attendance in many courses is due to several reasons (including the fact that regulations do not make attendance obligatory). The DPE pointed out that the classrooms are small to

accommodate the large number of students registered in some courses. This implies that improving building facilities and monitoring the number of students registered in courses may have an impact on increasing attendance.

Since a written policy to require compulsory attendance at university courses is restricted by law the EEC is highly concerned about student attendance in classes. The DPE should examine means and methods to encourage students to attend classes.

#### IMPLEMENTATION

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

The Secretariat of the DPE is staffed by 3 persons who have to provide administrative services to 22 academic staff, 6 contracted academics (PD. 407), about 850 undergraduate students and 104 postgraduate students (see IER, Appendix B). The EEC believes that the infrastructure is limited. Moreover, the EEC considers that the library facilities are adequately established but there is a need to enrich the catalogue with more recent books, international journals and other educational electronic material. Student access to the library, PCs and free internet access is considered to be satisfactory with improvements necessary.

The EEC visited a multipurpose room for theatre education and movement but did not visit any athletic facilities of the UoA. The EEC also found the restaurant and the cafeteria to be adequate.

#### RESULTS

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

Based on students' and graduates' comments during the interviews, it appears that the administrative services are not adequate. During the interviews with the staff, it was noted that no systematic counseling services for students is provided by the UoA. The EEC would like to acknowledge the effort of the DPE to develop a center for providing psychological support to students which is based on voluntary work of faculty members.

#### IMPROVEMENTS

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

The work of the administrative staff is vital for the effective functioning of the DPE. Despite the efforts of the academic staff and support from the existing administrative staff, there is an urgent need for increasing the number of administrative staff due to the recent loss of an administrative staff member.

### **Collaboration with social, cultural and production organizations**

Please, comment on quality, originality and significance of the Department's initiatives.

Overall the EEC is impressed with the quality, originality and significance of the Department's initiatives in this field. The passion, courage, intelligence and commitment of the faculty members are inspiring. Among the most significant of the DPE's initiatives is worth mentioning a) the Cine-Science seminar that involves the local community, b) the counselling centre of the UoA that closely collaborates with the Rhodes Hospital and the municipality, c) the support that the DPE students provide to children with special needs and old people, and d) the collaboration of faculty members and students of the DPE with museums and art galleries (for more details see section 9.1 of the IER).

The IER indicates that the DPE has effectively built close collaboration with various social, cultural and productive organisations. This was evident during the interviews with students and graduates of DPE as well as during the meetings with representatives of 16 organisations.

Relationships of the DPE with schools (especially experimental schools) are excellent as personally experienced by the EEC. The DPE students are encouraged to participate in the activities of these schools and conduct studies that contribute to their professional development.

### ***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.*

- Please, comment on the Department's Potential inhibiting factors at State, Institutional and Departmental level and Proposals on ways to overcome the above inhibiting factors.
- Short-, medium- and long-term goals.
- Plan and actions for improvement by the Department/Academic Unit
- Long-term actions proposed by the Department.

Strategic Planning is stated in the web page of the DPE (see <http://www.pre.aegean.gr/evaluation/default.aspx>). It mainly focuses on the objectives of each of the four main academic areas of DPE and explains how each of these areas contributes to the achievement of the wider aims of the department. It includes an account of inhibiting and potentially inhibiting factors at all levels (State, Institutional and Departmental) and ways of dealing with them. Perspectives for improvement are also mentioned.

The EEC considers the potential inhibiting factors to include the following:

*At State level*

1. Lack of educational funding (for example, no budget is allocated to the DPE)
2. Poor infrastructure
3. The impact of confounding legislature on standards of education (for example, no realistic time limit for the completion of a degree, no limit on the number of times a student can repeat a course).
4. Lack of adequate research funding within the DPE
5. Delays in appointing academic staff.

*At Institutional level*

1. Lack of academic staff in main domains (for example, Educational Research and Evaluation, Health Education, Teaching of Greek language, Curriculum Development, Educational Management)
2. Disproportionate numbers of academic staff in some domains
3. Allocation of inadequate facilities and premises (lecture rooms and faculty offices etc.).
4. Lack of research infrastructure, support and funding.
5. Limited international educational exchange opportunities for both faculty and students.

*Departmental level:*

1. Lack of formalized conceptual pedagogical/educational framework on which to anchor the curriculum, teaching and research.
2. Lack of structured Research Plan, which exclusively addresses pedagogical issues and aims to the contribution of the DPE to the theoretical development of the field internationally.
3. Limited use of an electronic platform for teaching and eLearning.

During the interviews with the faculty, it was mentioned that the DPE is working to improve the program of study.

Proposals on ways to overcome the above inhibiting factors are outlined in the final chapter of this report concluding with recommendations of the EEC.

### **Postgraduate studies**

The DPE offers a master's program in "Educational Sciences – Use of New Technologies in Education", focusing on research on using Information Technology in Education. A PhD program in Education is also offered by the DPE. The research policies and objectives of the Master and the PhD programs are in line to those of the DPE. The Master program is

designed to be a rigorous research degree in education. It is interdisciplinary; as noted above, students are not only drawn from education but also from other related disciplines.

The EEC's discussions with the postgraduate students clearly showed that they are very satisfied with the Master and the PhD program. Yet, students reported a desire for increased opportunities to collaborate with each other in an interdisciplinary manner and with students and professors from other Universities in Greece and from other countries.

Approximately 25 posts are offered each year for the Master program and a large number of research master's dissertations have been completed. The research conducted from the master students is disseminated through various channels which range from faculty-wide announcements to presentation of relevant papers in national and international conferences.

According to the IER, the research objectives of the master's program are successfully implemented. The EEC considers that this innovative interdisciplinary postgraduate program is very important for the development of doctoral research in relation to the use of information technology in education. The quality and adequacy of the research infrastructure and support for the master's and PhD degree is superior to that of the undergraduate degree.

However, EEC notes, as with the undergraduate curriculum earlier, that courses on research methods (focused on the use of advanced quantitative and qualitative techniques) should be provided to both Master and PhD students of the DPE. Research colloquia organized by the academic staff and the PhD students can also contribute to the improvement of the research skills of the graduate students of DPE. Furthermore, the EEC could not see the rationale behind the practice that teaching graduate courses is not counted for faculty teaching load.

## ***F. Final Conclusions and recommendations of the EEC***

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

Conclusions and recommendations of the EEC on:

the development of the Department to this date and its present situation, including explicit comments on good practices and weaknesses identified through the External Evaluation process and recommendations for improvement

- the Department's readiness and capability to change/improve
- the Department's quality assurance.

In the IER and during the site visit the EEC found the following to be strong elements of the DPE:

1. The DPE prepares students to become effective teachers in a multicultural society.
2. The considerable number of graduates of the DPE who successfully participate in the Master and the PhD program of the DPE as well as in graduate programs of other Universities in Greece and abroad.

3. The mentoring system successfully adopted for the teaching practice of undergraduate students of the DPE.
4. The considerable number of academics participating in conferences irrespective of the lack of financial support.
5. The development of strong collaborations with a wide range of social, cultural and productive organisations.
6. The collaboration of the academic staff of the DPE in running research projects and publishing joint papers disseminating the results of these projects.
7. The establishment by the DPE of an electronic journal for publishing its own research papers in education as well as papers of academics in other universities.
8. The fact that academic staff encourages students to participate in research projects and that a relatively high number of students is involved in projects of the DPE.
9. The hard efforts of the faculty to respond to the needs of large number of students, irrespective of deficient infrastructure (e.g., computer and science labs)
10. The continuous efforts to improve the facilities for teleconferencing.
11. The wide range of extra-curricular activities offered (e.g., cine-science, museum and art galleries) and the strong encouragement for volunteerism (e.g., centre for psychological support, supporting children with special needs and old people), thus connecting the DPE with the wider community.

The EEC found the DPE to be challenged in terms of:

1. Being situated in an island the DPE should find ways of attracting academics and students;
2. The lack of requirement for compulsory attendance of students for all theory and most practice components makes it more difficult for the DPE to achieve its learning goals regarding the cognitive, affective and psychomotor domains;
3. The lack of an eLearning capacity and electronic platform for supporting flexible, diverse and necessary learning strategies and resources;
4. The inadequacy of facilities, is not conducive to quality teaching and learning;
5. The budget constraints relating to staffing, resources, and teaching and learning materials requires additional effort to produce the expected learning and research outcomes of the DPE

We thank the DPE for their contribution to this evaluation and wish them well in their future development.

Accordingly, having completed this review and given due consideration to the findings, the EEC recommends the following for the attention and address by the Ministry of Education.

**It is recommended that:**

- 1. Extensive work needs to be done in restructuring the curriculum and the**

**program of study (at undergraduate level).**

- 1.1 The curriculum should fully cover the needs for an in-depth understanding of contemporary theories of effective teaching that address generic and domain specific skills (especially in the core subjects of Language and Mathematics).
- 1.2 Courses in educational research methodology, curriculum development, educational management, health education and comparative education should be included in the curriculum.
- 1.3 Student participation in developing the new curriculum could be encouraged.

**2. The program of study should be redesigned taking into account the rational of the ECTS approach (undergraduate level).**

- 2.1. Describe the courses following the ECTS format by indicating learning outcomes, workload, subject matter, evaluation procedures and bibliography.
- 2.2. The program of study is overloaded with courses, resulting in allocation of a relatively small number of ECTS per course (particularly but not only, to elective courses). Reallocation of ECTS is urgently needed. That will result in reducing the number of required courses.
- 2.3. The program of study should be structured in terms of prerequisites and an indicative example should be provided.

**3. The Ministry of Education has to provide the financial means to the DPE for appointing academics and supporting research.**

- 3.1. The number of courses and the student-teacher ratio requires additional academic personnel especially in areas that are not covered in the current program of study.
- 3.2. Academics and PhD students should be entitled to financial support in order to present their research findings in well-respected international conferences

**4. The DPE has to develop mechanisms to monitor the effective implementation of the curriculum.**

- 4.1 The DPE should develop a mechanism to control student registration and reduce significantly the number of students enrolled in certain theoretical courses.



- 4.2 A maximum number of students per-course should be established. In the case of courses offered in labs the maximum number should be in line with the available facilities of the labs.
- 4.3 Academic advisors should be actively involved in guiding students in selecting their courses and dealing more effectively with the demands of each course.
- 4.4 The DPE should use information technologies not only for administrative purposes but also for announcing the program of study, the final exam timetables and the final exam results.
- 4.5 The teaching of graduate courses should be counted in faculty teaching load.

**5. The inadequate facilities are addressed as a matter of urgency.**

- 5.1. The DPE should take actions in order to update equipment for the computer and the science labs (including software).
- 5.2. The DPE should encourage the systematic use of an electronic/digital platform for eLearning and study skills support.
- 5.3. The DPE should draw attention to its members to make use of the platform for promoting flexible and interactive group learning.
- 5.4. The DPE should enrich its library with more up to date teaching material, books, international journals and other educational electronic material. On line facilities for the faculty staff and students should also be provided.

**6. The DPE should develop a policy and take actions to improve the quality of student assessment.**

- 6.1 For quality learning, students should be evaluated using diverse sources and ongoing assessment methods and should receive corresponding feedback.
- 6.2 The DPE should require that examination results be announced to students within a fixed period.
- 6.3 It is recommended that examination papers evaluate students' creative and critical thinking and problem solving ability.

**7. The DPE should take actions to promote research in education.**

- 7.1 The EEC believes that more emphasis should be given to basic research that can have a significant contribution to the theory development and testing, as well as to upgrading of the research status of the DPE.
- 7.2 International dissemination of research findings should be encouraged.
- 7.3 The DPE should collect information on the publication and citation record of each academic and upload them on its web page.

- 7.4 The DPE Web site needs to be further developed and updated with all the faculty CVs, research interests, and course descriptions. An English short version of the Web site of DPE with the mission of the department, the research interests and CVs of faculty members should be developed. This version may contribute to the establishment of international research collaborations.
- 7.5 The DPE establishes an Internal Human Research Ethics Committee charged with the oversight and decision-making of all research in the Department

**8. Budget constraints on staffing to be addressed.**

- 8.1 The number of administrative staff must be increased.
- 8.2 The Administration of the UoA must support the Secretariat staff in personal career development so that they can fulfill their mission to provide high quality services to the students and the academic staff as the IER indicates.
- 8.3 There is need to conduct a survey in order to evaluate the quality of services provided by the Secretariat. The results could be useful for the improvement of these services.

## The Members of the Committee

Name and Surname

Signature

1. Prof George Philipou (Coordinator)
2. Dr Martha Apostolidou
3. Dr Leonidas Kyriakides