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

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION AND SPORT SCIENCE

NATIONAL AND KAPODISTRIAN UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS

December 2013



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External Evaluation Committee

The Committee responsible for the External Evaluation of the Department of Physical Education and Sport Science, of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens consisted of the following four (4) expert evaluators drawn from the Registry constituted by the HQAA in accordance with Law 3374/2005:

1. Prof. Adamantios Arampatzis (Coordinator)
Humboldt University, Berlin, Germany
2. Prof. Vasilios Baltzopoulos
Brunel University, London, UK
3. Prof. Vassilios Vardaxis,
Des Moines University, Iowa, USA
4. Prof. Konstantinos Tsintzas
Nottingham University, Nottingham, UK

Introduction

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.

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 Department of Physical Education and Sport Science has been given a single-department Faculty status (Faculty of Physical Education and Sport Science) in the recent re-organisation of the University structure, and is based in its own campus in the area of Dafni, approximately 4 km from the central University campus.

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) received the relevant electronic documentation and links to the uploaded internal evaluation reports and data from HQAA in advance of the visit. The EEC met on Sunday 8 December in Athens and had some brief preliminary discussions about the External Evaluation process and the programme of the planned visit to the Department. On Monday 9 December, the EEC went to the HQAA Headquarters in Athens for a briefing meeting with other External Evaluation Committees. Members of the HQAA Council explained the External Evaluation process and the function of HQAA and there was also an opportunity to discuss any specific questions or general issues raised by various EEC members.

The EEC then visited the Department in the Dafni campus between 9th and 11th December 2013. The Committee met initially with the Head of Department and the chair of the internal evaluation committee. This was followed by an introductory presentation on the history, structure and development of the Department by the current Head of the Department. Detailed presentations on the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes of study were given by the directors of these programmes and were followed by discussions with the EEC in an open forum with the Head of the Department, the Quality Assurance team, as well as the heads of the various Sections and faculty members representing the various academic disciplines and academic ranks. The chair of the Internal Evaluation Committee also presented the main findings of the internal evaluation report and the methods used to collect the information. During this long and well-attended session, there were detailed discussions about the main issues identified in the internal evaluation report for the teaching and research activities of the Department.

At the start of the next day, the EEC met with a large number of academic staff in an open meeting to discuss and debate the various issues identified by the Department and the EEC

and proposed actions. This was a very useful and fruitful meeting that helped the external evaluation process but it was felt that it was also a very useful and helpful process for the Department and the academic staff that attended the meeting. During the rest of the external evaluation programme over the following two days, the EEC also met and discussed with the curriculum committee about the review of the undergraduate programme of studies, representative groups of undergraduate and postgraduate (Master and Doctoral level) students, as well as administrative and technical support staff. Members of the Committee also visited the laboratories, computer teaching room, library, secretariat building and offices, medical room and some of the sports facilities in the Dafni campus and the office of the Vice-Rector for Academic Affairs in the central campus of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, where they discussed the main issues and challenges facing the Department and the University support required for the Department.

The visit was well organised and the Department provided additional material and information during the visit, including electronic copies of the presentations, curricula and research funding details. The internal evaluation committee used appropriate sources and documentation and collected and processed information over a long period of time that was a very challenging and time consuming process. However, this resulted in detailed evidence of high degree of completeness that allowed some very accurate observations. It is hoped that a more frequent evaluation process in the future will lead to a more efficient and less time consuming process. The methodical and extensive work of the internal evaluation committee ensured that the objectives of the internal evaluation process have been broadly met by the Department. The internal evaluation report identified both the strengths and weaknesses of the Department although there were no specific proposals or suggested solutions for a number of important issues, something that should be part of any effective evaluation and quality assurance process. Overall, the EE Committee's view was that we had access to all the material and additional information that was required for the external evaluation process and we would like to thank all the members of staff and students for their hospitality, contributions and cooperation.

A. Curriculum

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

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?

The mission of the Department of Physical Education and Sport Science in Athens is to develop and promote physical education and sports science through basic and applied research, provide its graduates with the necessary skills for their future professional and scientific careers in the field of physical education and sports science, contribute to the advancement of sports in Greece, promote the Olympic ideals to the wider society, and promote the importance of physical education in maintaining and improving quality of life.

The main objectives of the Department have remained the same for the last 30 years (since the official launch of the Department as a University unit) and take into account the perceived needs of the students as future physical education teachers in primary and secondary schools, the policies and regulations of the Greek State, and the nationwide requirements of the physical education sector. The Department has a very long and well-founded ambition to become a Faculty with two separate departments in order to serve better its objectives and achieve its mission and past efforts to re-organise the curriculum were informed and in part influenced by this ambition.

The Department has an Internal Review Committee (consisting of academic staff and student representatives) that was set up in 2010 with the mandate to evaluate the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes and identify the strengths and weaknesses of the operation of the Department and its curriculum. However, it is not clear how the outcome of this initial internal evaluation will be used to formulate suggestions for improvement within the context of a wider strategic plan and the procedures for subsequent implementation of the proposed changes in the structure and content of the curriculum.

Undergraduate Programme

The Department consists of 6 sections (Sports Medicine and Biology of Exercise; Theoretical Sciences; Team Sports; Gymnastics and Dance; Track and Field Sports; Water Sports), which have the overall responsibility for teaching delivery of courses in all sub-disciplines of the curriculum. The study curriculum covers 8 semesters that requires the completion of at least 130 ECTS and includes core and optional modules (including some prerequisites), work experience and a final year dissertation.

The impression of the ECC is that the curriculum is consistent with the objectives that were set 30 years ago. In its current format, however, the curriculum does not reflect the current professional needs of students as it continues to focus on producing future teachers of Physical Education and/or athletic coaches. Indeed, there are numerous courses focusing on

teaching and coaching of all Olympic and some non-Olympic sports and the curriculum as a whole is focused on primary and high school physical education curriculum and high performance coaching. However, over the last few years the requirements for physical education teachers in state-funded schools have decreased dramatically and therefore the objectives of the Department are not aligned with current developments and needs and therefore ought to be re-evaluated. Notwithstanding this, there is clear intent by the current staff to steer the curriculum towards the use of sports science for the improvement of quality of life through prevention of disease and exercise prescription. This shift in the curriculum towards the health related aspects of participation in physical activities and sports is in line with changes implemented in many institutions in Europe and North America over the last 20 years or so. Therefore, the Department should develop closer links with its main stakeholders including the Greek Ministry of Education and local and national health, fitness and coaching bodies to identify the new professional trends and needs of the society as a whole, which will inform future changes in the curriculum.

Graduate Programme

The Department offers 2 graduate programmes in “Biology of Exercise” and “Physical Education and Sports” both at Masters and doctoral level. The study curriculum at the Masters level covers 4-6 semesters that requires the completion of at least 120 ECTS and includes core and optional taught courses and a dissertation. Both graduate programmes require the completion of 6 core courses, 1 advanced module, 4-5 elective courses (chosen from different thematic groups) and the undertaking of a research project. In addition, the “Physical Education and Sports” programme only stipulates the publication of one paper in a high quality international journal as part of its completion requirements.

In both programmes, the study curriculum at the Doctoral level covers between 6 and 8 semesters and requires the completion of 180 ECTS that includes 30 ECTS of 3 core taught courses and 150 ECTS through a project dissertation. The taught courses required for the completion of the doctoral programme should be completed within the first 6 semesters. Furthermore, both programmes stipulate the publication of 2 papers in high quality peer-reviewed international journals as part of their completion requirements.

The curriculum of the graduate programme is intense but appropriate for this level of full-time postgraduate study. The requirement for one published paper for the completion of the graduate programme in “Physical Education and Sports” is original and designed to improve the quality of the programme. However, inadvertently this may lead to significant delays in completion of the programme (well beyond the designated minimum of 2 years) and hence delay the entry into the doctoral programme. Given the recent trend for increased time between submitting and publishing a scientific paper in high quality journals, this requirement should be modified to include one submitted rather than published paper.

The requirement for 2 published papers in the doctoral programme is desirable and ensures the quality of the doctoral theses produced. However, to facilitate the successful implementation of this requirement, measures should be taken to maximise the experimental research time (an essential part of doctoral training) at the expense of the time required to complete the taught part of the programme e.g. within the first 1 year rather than the current requirement of 3 years.

In general, it is not clear what happens to students that fail to complete the graduate programme within the stipulated deadlines. It is recognised that some flexibility is necessary given the socioeconomic conditions and related personal issues for a number of students.

However, procedures should be implemented to ensure that significant delays and/or withdrawals from the programme are dealt with consistently and fairly for all students and that their individual circumstances are taken into consideration.

IMPLEMENTATION AND RESULTS

- 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?
- 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?

Undergraduate Program

Overall, the structure of the programme is well described and the course content is up to date. However, as highlighted in the previous section, in its current format the curriculum does not reflect the current professional needs of students as it continues to focus on producing future teachers of Physical Education and athletic coaches. Over the last few years the requirements for physical education teachers in state-funded schools in Greece has decreased dramatically and therefore the curriculum is not aligned with current developments and needs as it contains numerous courses focusing on teaching and coaching of all Olympic and some non-Olympic sports. However, it is recognised that the decision to continue to provide Physical Education training is a historical decision and one of the main components of the mission of the department and that systematic training in the Olympic Sports is a constitutional demand laid down in legislation when the University departments of Sport Science and Physical Education were established in Greece.

Currently, the number of core (34) and optional courses (8) and the required contact hours (22-26 per week) is too high resulting in heavy student and academic staff workload. Although the use of optional courses required for degree completion is desirable, their total number (in excess of 200) is excessive and this reduces the efficiency of teaching provision and limits student time for self-directed learning (an important aspect of modern University education as it promotes critical thinking and independent pursuit of scientific knowledge). A reduction in the number of courses and weekly contact time will not only increase student time for self-directed study but will have the additional benefit of freeing up time for academic members of staff to engage in the pursuit of their research interests. It should be noted however that there is clear intent by the current staff to introduce a radical curricular review and improvement and steer the curriculum towards the use of sports science for the improvement of quality of life through prevention of disease and exercise prescription.

The absence of a basic course in scientific writing early on in the study curriculum means that students may complete their degree without acquiring a basic and very important

academic skill. The introduction of such course in the first semester of the study curriculum will also allow the inclusion of interim individual or group reports in theory-based courses that will encourage both active learning and attendance of relevant lectures and seminars. This is especially true if such reports form part of the course assessment, in addition to other forms of examination, to allow the introduction of diversity and more fairness in course assessment.

Overall, the undergraduate programme will be strengthened by the implementation of a more flexible curriculum that will allow the students to follow different fields of study in the last 2 years of their degree, a process that will be underpinned by a shift in the emphasis of the curriculum towards the health related aspects of participation in physical activities and sports in line with changes implemented in many institutions in Europe and North America over the last 20 years or so.

Graduate Program

From our meetings with approximately 20 graduate students (both MSc and PhD students), students appear to be very satisfied with their programme and the quality of supervision.

Highly specialised and lab-based taught courses are more relevant at this level and the students seem to enjoy and appreciate the more practical approach in such courses. Hence the recommendation is to place more emphasis on highly specialised courses and the introduction of more practical and hands-on experience. This is particularly necessary in the statistics and research methods course where the absence of training in the use of advanced computer software (e.g. SPSS) is of particular concern at this level of postgraduate study. We acknowledge that there is lack of financial support for equipment maintenance and purchase of software and consumables, which hinders the implementation of this objective and this is an issue that the Department ought to seriously consider when exploring feasible ways to increase its research income.

We also noticed the absence of an advanced course in scientific writing and oral presentations skills at the graduate level. The introduction of such course will further assist with the production of quality graduate and doctoral theses and the reputation of the programme. This is particularly important because of the geographical isolation of the Department which means that the postgraduate students do not benefit from generic and study skills courses offered by the University in its central campus.

Overall, the postgraduate programme will be strengthened by the introduction of more practical experience and research time, which will equip its graduate students with the necessary skills for their future scientific careers.

IMPROVEMENT

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

There is clear intent by the Department to steer the curriculum towards the use of sports and exercise science for the improvement of quality of life through maintenance of health and exercise prescription. This Committee strongly supports this initiative as the focus on

exercise, physical activity and health is in line with contemporary developments in the curricula of leading international universities.

The following recommendations can only be implemented if a different teaching philosophy is adopted, one that redesigns the current methods of teaching delivery and examination. Please see Teaching section for more information.

Recommendations (Undergraduate Programme):

1. Consider reducing the number of core courses and the number of contact weekly hours from 6 to 4 for the practical (sports) courses (15 out of 34) in order to reduce the workload of both students and academic staff. Currently, the number of core courses (34) and the required contact hours (22-26 per week in the different semesters) are too high and limit the student time available for self-directed studying and learning. The reduction of teaching contact time will have the additional benefit of freeing up time for academic members of staff to engage in the pursuit of their research interests.
2. One approach to achieve the above recommendation is to consider reducing the number of sport specific courses. Rather than covering every single Olympic sport, the basic principles of sports specific education can be developed in the context of 4 or 5 basic, thematic courses (e.g. team sports; swimming/aquatic sports; track and field sports; dance and gymnastics; coaching principles and theory).
3. All theory-based courses should include 1 hour of lectures followed by 2 hours of small group tutorials, seminars or laboratory practicals to allow for critical evaluation of the concepts presented in the lectures, and presentation of individual and/or team seminars on current related topics from the published literature.
4. Consider the introduction of a course in the first semester of the study curriculum that will deal with the basic principles of scientific writing. Consistent with this, all practical courses should then include the completion of interim individual or group mini reports that will encourage both active learning and attendance of relevant lectures and practical classes. These reports should form part of the course examination to allow the introduction of diversity and more fairness in the assessment of acquired knowledge by the student.
5. The use of optional courses required for degree completion is desirable but their number is excessive and should also decrease to enhance efficiency of teaching provision and increase student time for self-directed learning, which encourages critical thinking and other academic skills (including search of scientific literature and writing up).
6. The use of pre-requisite courses is also desirable but should be implemented to facilitate and not hinder course selection by the students.
7. The Curriculum Committee should be responsible for a regular (every 4 to 5 years) evaluation of the curriculum with the aim of updating it in accordance with the changing needs of the society and the relevant stakeholders.

Recommendations (Graduate Programme):

1. The graduate programme requires the completion of 6 core courses, 1 advanced module, 4-5 elective courses (chosen from different thematic groups) and the undertaking of a research project. Based on discussions with members of the academic staff and postgraduate students, our opinion is to revisit the ratio of core to highly specialised taught courses with more emphasis on the latter category and

focus on experimental practical experiences. This is particularly important in the statistics and research methods course where the absence of training in the use of advanced computer software (e.g. SPSS) is of particular concern at this level of postgraduate study.

2. The requirement for one published paper for the completion of the graduate programme in “Physical Education and Sports” although is designed to improve the quality of the programme has adverse effects on the time required to complete the studies (well beyond the designated 2 years) and also delay the entry into the doctoral programme. Given the recent trend for increased time between submitting and publishing a scientific paper in high quality journals, we propose that this requirement should be modified to include one submitted rather than published paper.
3. The requirement for 2 published papers in the doctoral programme should remain to ensure the quality of the doctoral theses and the reputation of the programme as a whole, providing that measures are taken to maximise the experimental research time at the expense of the time required to complete the core courses.
4. With regard to the last point, efforts should be made to ensure that the 3 core courses required for the completion of the doctoral programme are completed within the first 1 year rather than the current requirement of completion within 3 years.
5. Consider the introduction of an advanced module in scientific writing and oral presentations skills to assist with the production of quality graduate and doctoral theses.
6. The Curriculum Committee should be responsible for a regular (every 4 to 5 years) evaluation of the curriculum with the aim of updating it in accordance with the changing needs of the society and the relevant stakeholders.

B. Teaching

APPROACH:

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

Please comment on :

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

The teaching approach and methodology of the Department, as stated in the self-evaluation report (page 24), aims to guide the students in the process of knowledge discovery in the science of exercise by giving them the opportunity to observe, compare and consciously transfer theory to practice. While there was no evidence of a defined departmental policy towards the teaching approach with respect to pedagogy and methodology, there was plenty of evidence of the dedication of the teaching staff and the student thirst for learning. The absence of such policies creates a void that in a small number of cases is filled by the individual lecturers/instructors.

The teaching methods used in the Department vary with the type of course: practical vs. theory-based. The lecturers/instructors use a variety of delivery techniques that are in general appropriate for both types of courses. In 2010-11 academic year approximately 1797 undergraduate students (~450 in each year) participated actively in the courses taught in the Department. In the same year, the Department had 114.5 (average over the 2010-2011) academic staff members including permanent academic members and non-permanent instructors posted from the primary and secondary schools. Thus, in 2012 the overall undergraduate teaching student/staff ratio was approximately 15.7. This number is within the range of international standards and can be viewed as better than adequate ratio and provides a good foundation for improvement in quality of teaching and learning. Regarding this issue, it has to be mentioned that the number of courses offered by the Department, including practical and theory-based courses, is extremely high and it is the impression of the EEC that this creates an overload on both School resources (staff and facilities) and students and leads to an ineffective and inefficient teaching and learning environment. Moreover, due to the high number of offered courses, an overlap of classes is inevitable and difficult to avoid.

The high number of students matriculating per year versus the number of positions offered by the Department is at a rate of approximately 2.1 to 2.3 and it places a significant burden on facilities and the teaching personnel. While the facilities issue is difficult to resolve, the teaching personnel is supplemented by a relatively high number of staff members from the primary and secondary schools having only a short term teaching contract. Discussions with undergraduate students revealed that the quality of these instructors (posted from schools) is variable ranging from excellent to inappropriate or insufficient. There should be an induction programme for training these instructors to the academic standards expected in higher education before they are allowed to teach in the undergraduate curriculum of the University.

Most of the teaching resources and facilities are substandard and in urgent need of upgrade considering the number of students in the programmes. Specifically, most of the sports facilities, computing, library and the various scientific laboratories are in poor condition. The students' computer room has out-dated equipment and software, it is not staffed and the course on "Information Technology in Physical Education" is not offered due to staffing/budget issues. In addition, the library has only 2 functional computers, which limits the move towards a more widespread use of digital resources that are central to higher education and an important element of student learning resources in the modern world. Furthermore, the reduction in library personnel and the limited time duration for lending books make an appropriate preparation for the classes, projects and theses very difficult for the students (undergraduate and graduate).

The departmental short and long term strategic planning is non-existent with significant consequences for the essential process of curriculum restructuring, and the confidence, work placement and industry employment of the undergraduate students and their tendency to prolong the degree duration and seek multiple specializations (currently allowing a maximum of two). Based on the low number of the annual positions available in public schools and the understanding of the EEC of the society requirements (market analysis on this issue is not available), the focus on student education and the market needs do not match. A change in the programme focus towards the field of exercise and health would benefit considerably and better prepare the undergraduate students for their future work and careers.

Considering the library resources movement towards digital media and the teaching and learning system of e-class, internet access through wired or Wi-Fi becomes essential for academic staff members and students. In general, e-class is appropriate and of good standard. However, this electronic learning platform is not regularly used by staff or instructors in practical classes and only a small number of staff ~40% upload and upgrade documents for their students, including lecture presentations and a significantly smaller number have made complete courses available online. This is a significant weakness and a lost opportunity (given the availability of such an excellent electronic system) to improve the quality of teaching and student learning experience.

In general, the examination system is well structured and supported administratively. The course syllabi normally include the grading breakdown, which is communicated to the students in each course. However, there is a small number of courses where there is no specific information of the different examination methods. Furthermore, examination criteria for practical and sport skill courses need to be specified more clearly with generic assessment criteria for the different grades. It is essential that all courses and examinations - including those within the sport skills areas – are defined clearly with objective criteria for each grade. This is particularly important due to the high number of non-permanent instructors posted from the primary and secondary schools that need to apply similar assessment standards. In addition, the creation of a student learning committee would benefit the Department with the mandate to check and consider the overall examination and assessment process across courses and semesters and consider issues of progression and examination workload of students. Despite the fact that there is currently no provision in the University system for a formal or structured system for internal moderation of the examination and assessment material or external examination, such an approach could be suggested for the new organisational structure document of the University. This is an essential element of quality assurance in student assessment.

IMPLEMENTATION

Please comment on:

- Quality of teaching procedures
- Quality and adequacy of teaching materials and resources.
- Quality of course material. Is it brought up to date?
- Linking of research with teaching
- Mobility of academic staff and students
- Evaluation by the students of (a) the teaching and (b) the course content and study material/resources

The majority of teaching methods and techniques implemented are practical sports, face-to-face lectures, and laboratory sessions. In particular, the undergraduate students have a very high number of practical sports-related courses required in the curriculum. This has a clear negative impact on the effectiveness of teaching and learning and is supported by evidence that a high percentage of students (~40%) do not study independently outside class hours. It is recommended to reduce the number of required sports-related practical courses and their number of contact hours and maintain the focus on key sports and activities and switch the daily order of teaching (main theoretical courses in the morning and sports practical courses in the afternoon).

At the undergraduate level, the EEC committee noticed very limited active learning processes in place, while it is worth noticing that these processes are employed more frequently at the

graduate level. A more widespread implementation of such methods will be of benefit to all students and these can include more frequent scientific discussions, group projects, tutorials, and seminars. By including such teaching methods the staff could engage the students to use the library regularly in small groups or individually, to work more with scientific papers and to handle different measurement techniques and methods. In addition, such active learning processes help improve the students' ability for independent learning and to better prepare the students to complete/write undergraduate or graduate level projects. The requirements of attending seminars or tutorials where students will be required to participate actively with individual or group presentations can also facilitate studying and engaging with different individual or group learning activities outside the main lecture contact hours. Such in-class or out of classroom activities can provide foundation for a better spread of the grading system within each course with the opportunity for progressive grading throughout the term, which not only will engage the students but keep their interest in the course. This approach can also remove the stress of single final examination courses that are not pedagogically appropriate and keep the students away from the course content and do not encourage course attendance.

The Department has no instructional support services in place or at planning stage. This is unacceptable considering that a large percentage of the teaching staff are on a contract basis and have no teaching experience in higher education. The EEC believes that these support services are essential and the Department must provide training courses and workshops for all academic staff on improvement of teaching and learning techniques using modern methods of student engagement and independent learning. This guidance and training (by the Department or the University, which may not be practical considering the geographic isolation of the Department) for enhancing teaching methods should be compulsory and available for all academic staff members but more importantly for the junior and newly appointed lecturers and for the non-permanent instructors posted from the primary and secondary schools.

Currently, only a limited number of staff members regularly use the electronic learning platform or utilise its full potential for teaching and learning purposes. This is a significant resource that the Department has and the need to be implemented to all undergraduate courses cannot be understated. The Department should organize regular software training sessions for all academic staff members and provide more appropriate-learning guidelines and training to increase the usage of this electronic learning platform.

The main mobility of academic staff and students is the inter-departmental transfer of students and the significant student influx towards this Department from other Universities in the country that hinders the curriculum delivery and provides substantial challenges to the teaching and learning process. The student mobility through the Erasmus programme is at a respectable level averaging at ~40 students per year with a higher percentage ~60% of departmental students attending coursework at European institutions. However, the student's mobility could be improved with better communication of EU travel grants/opportunities and by increasing specific international contacts by more members of the faculty. Specifically, graduate students could benefit from such additional activities that can enhance their academic career opportunities and increase the research collaborations between the Department and other international institutions. The mobility of the faculty is very small and the limited data available to the EEC indicate that it is specifically focused on short visits. The Department can benefit significantly by creating a process/roadmap that will enable faculty to participate in this process with educational and scholarship implications.

The student participation in various courses and instructor evaluation process must be improved, while recently all the courses of the Department were evaluated by the students the number of students participated in the process decreased with the implementation of the electronic course evaluation system. A departmental committee is needed to oversee this process, which will not only address the low number of student participation in the assessment process, but it will create a sustainable process aiming at the utilization of the collected information for the improvement of the teaching and learning and change the current culture of simply summarizing the findings. The process should include mechanisms of dissemination of the finding to the instructors in a timely manner, implementation and oversight of the process of summative course assessment by the instructor and the formulation and implementation of the recommendations on an annual, sustainable basis. The overall process should aim at the optimization and renewal of the course content and support material, content delivery improvement, and the student learning outcomes based on the course objectives and its place in the curriculum, based on student feedback.

RESULTS

Please comment on:

- Efficacy of teaching.
- Discrepancies in the success/failure percentage between courses and how they are justified.
- Differences between students in (a) the time to graduation, and (b) final degree grades.
- Whether the Department understands the reasons of such positive or negative results?

The dedication and commitment of the academic staff and the desire to learn from the student body were evident to the EEC and it requires our notice. These efforts of the faculty extend beyond their job description aiming to facilitate the delivery of their coursework and the realization of their own and the student research agendas. Specifically, in the absence of the teaching and learning assessment process a small number of faculty members of staff have implemented such processes on their own with significant accomplishments. It should also be noticed, in the discussions during the onsite visit of the EEC with members of the academic staff, there was a consensus and maturity towards the implementation of such teaching efficacy process.

However, as it has been noted above, there is still significant opportunity for improvement concerning teaching efficacy. Furthermore, the discussions of the EEC with the students indicated that, in general, the students are satisfied with the quality of their studies and educational experience, while noticing the burden of the very long hours required for the delivery of the curriculum in its current format. There are significant discrepancies in the success/failure percentage between courses that are not justifiable. This became obvious at the EEC interaction with the undergraduate student body reaching the point of despair. The respective faculty members attribute the high failure rate to low student effort whereas the student body on the method of examination, the unusually high expectation of the respective members of staff, and the necessity/interest of the subject matter in some cases. Regardless of the reason(s) of this discrepancy a process of moderation should be in place, which will safeguard the transparency and fairness of the examination process. In addition, a stronger academic interaction and collaboration between faculty and students is needed. The graduation rate is relatively low as compared to the international standards. In the absence

of accurate data, a rough estimation indicates approximately 64% of the students graduate on time and this appears to be slightly lower than other similar Schools in Greece. It is recognised that there are very valid social, economic and educational background and expectations reasons for these lower graduation rates that are beyond the control of the departments and relate to the general socioeconomic and school education conditions in the country. However, every effort must be made by the Department in supporting the students, enhancing their educational experience and structuring the curriculum to modern conditions and expectations in order to improve retention and graduation rates. The EEC based in its interaction with faculty, students and support personnel of the Department has noticed an overall positive environment with clear appreciation, desire, expectation and willingness for change with the objective of further improvement in teaching quality in the Department.

IMPROVEMENT

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

The internal evaluation report process of the Department has initiated a notable number of activities for teaching improvement purposes. These processes fall short with respect to the implementation of meaningful changes, with the most noticeable positive change in the mentality and the attitudes of the staff members towards the process. The members of the internal evaluation report committee need to be commended for their efforts and dedication as well as the wide faculty body for their willingness to put in place changes that will move the Department forward.

The recommendations proposed below by the EEC, may be viewed as a guide and suggestions aimed at helping to move the Department staff towards better support and improvement in the quality of teaching in the future.

The following recommendations are proposed by the External Evaluation Committee:

1. Student daily class time workload is very high. Consider reducing the number of required courses with practical/activity subject matter. Establish a process that will be based on student/faculty communication and student interest.
2. Student daily class time workload is very high. Consider reducing the number of weekly contact hours in courses with practical/sports activity subject matter. Establish a process that will be based on the skills/knowledge required by the current market needs.
3. Culture of learning only in the classroom issue. An undergraduate student needs to complete 42 courses during six semesters, at a rate of 7-8 courses per semester. This is extremely high and does not allow much time for the students to improve their skills and knowledge through independent learning. Consider activities such as scientific discussions, library work, laboratory activities, group projects, tutorials, seminars, and working scientific papers.
4. Teaching workload discrepancy issue. The discrepancy in teaching workload between academic faculty members seems quite arbitrary and predominantly based on rank and subject matter specialization. Consider a workload model based on teaching, research, service and administration that will be transparent and fair. The teaching workload can be reduced by using different teaching techniques or methods, e.g. one lecture, one seminar and one tutorial or, alternatively, one practical laboratory class. This would potentially unload the faculty and the supporting resources (staff and teaching facilities) and thereby, lead to a more efficient teaching and learning. Moreover, establish a process that will oversee and reduce the content overlap between different courses. These issues could be considered by the departmental curriculum committee for example that needs to oversee the process of continuous curriculum review.

5. Course timing overlap issue. An overlap of classes and courses was observed, in some cases due to geographic locations of the course offering, this is a very challenging issue considering the very high number of courses offered by the Department, however a situation that needs to be avoided. This may be achieved by more precisely pre-planning the time schedule of the students and by reducing the number of classes.
6. Timing and amount of practical course offerings: The number and the timing of the practical sports-related courses mainly in the morning have a clear negative impact on the effectiveness of the theoretical teaching and learning which usually takes place in the afternoon. It is recommended to reduce the number of practical courses (see curriculum section) and to reduce the number, switch the order of teaching or to mix practical and theoretical courses.
7. Quality of teaching and learning assessment: The teaching and learning assessment was initiated with the internal assessment process and fell short in the use of the information gathered and the number of students that participated in the process. Consider establishing a quality assessment committee that will standardize, oversee and implement a process that will aim at higher student participation and the improvement of the quality of teaching and learning (see comments above). Consider a timely and continuous implementation of this process with the necessary changes required over time and the specific discipline and type of course.
8. Quality of teaching and learning assessment: There seems to be no effective process through which the academic staff consider the results of student evaluation aimed at improvement of the instructor, the course content, the teaching methods or any other element of course delivery. Consider through the quality assessment committee to establish a compulsory instructor centered based summative evaluation of each course that takes into account the student feedback and proposes recommendations for course changes on an annual basis.
9. Electronic course content delivery system usage issue: A very small number of courses take complete advantage of the electronic media system available for course content and student engagement purposes. Consider offering educational training to teaching staff in the use of this resource and establish the culture of its use to assist with student engagement, transparency and self-learning.
10. Inconsistency and in some cases only summative course examination issue: Consider standardization of the course examination criteria/process. Implement a progressive evaluation process that will keep the students engaged and reduce the burden of stress of the single final exam assessment process. This can also be accomplished by establishing teaching assistantships for graduate students that will help with the increase in the marking load associated with this potential change of student assessment beyond a single final examination.

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?
- Has the Department set internal standards for assessing research?

Although research was not a priority for the Department for many years, it is quite clear that the department invested time and effort in recent years to promote research and encourage

the academic staff to conduct research in the scientific areas and academic disciplines of the Department. Although there is some research activity in different scientific areas such as clinical exercise, health promotion and disease management and prevention, the main research objectives of the Department are focussed on high-level athletic performance. However, a significant number of the Department's members recognize the urgent need for research on health promotion and disease prevention through physical activity, exercise and sports participation. Conferences organised.

It is noticeable that the active researchers in the Department encourage and promote research participation at the graduate as well as at the undergraduate level. It is also evident that the majority of the Department's laboratories have basic or poor quality and out-dated equipment that do not allow high quality/competitive research. Only a small number of the current laboratories are adequately equipped to pursue internationally competitive research in the scientific fields of sport and exercise sciences.

Despite these infrastructural and financial conditions, the Department's efforts to promote research meetings and conferences are recognized and include:

- the 12th Panhellenic Congress of Sport Psychology entitled "Exercise and Sports in Children and Adolescent: Psychological Approach" (2008)
- the 1st Congress of Sports Science entitled "Research and Applications in Sports Science" (May 2011)
- the 2nd Congress of Sports Science entitled "Exercise & Health" (April 2013)
- the XIV International Conference entitled "Environmental Ergonomics" (July 2013)
- the 3rd Congress of Biochemistry & Physiology of Exercise (November 2013)
- from November 14 to June 2013, weekly daily seminars organized on topics relevant to various fields of sport science (exercise in water and health, risks during exercise, prevention in team sports, physical disability, dance as a motor development activity, new didactics in track and field, social and philosophical perspectives in physical activity, contemporary training in team sports, contemporary methods in resistance training, space-time and emotions in Sports).

There is neither a strategic plan nor a coordinated process for research conducted by the members of the Department. The Department does not have a clear vision and policy that includes intended/specific scientific objectives to support and enhance research. One of the most important reasons that hinder research efficiency within the different scientific sections of the Department is the high level of bureaucracy. The Department does not have in place a research committee aiming to plan, define and oversee the necessary steps for the scientific development of the Department and its research work. Currently, all possible suggestions and visions about the current and future research strategy must be decided by the general assembly of the Department. This approach is not flexible and does not support the creativity and the motivation of the researchers.

Furthermore, there are no clearly defined, and sufficiently and objectively standardized processes for research quality assessment. The development of such standards will provide clarity in the research process, increase the motivation for scientific work and potentially increase the efficiency of high quality research.

IMPLEMENTATION

- How does the Department promote and support research?
- Quality and adequacy of research infrastructure and support.

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

The promotion and support of research, although requested for the majority of the Department's members is limited by a number of factors that include the lack of a clear research strategy and specific plan for research support and development. In addition, the low level of research funding (internal and external) appears to be an important deficit that affects the promotion and support of high quality research.

The Department has a large number of laboratories (currently 11 labs) for its size and an adequate number of active researchers showing a high capacity for research performance. However, only a small number of the existing laboratories have sufficient equipment infrastructure for high quality research. The infrastructure of most laboratories is outdated and not adequate for conducting high quality research, and it is sufficient for use for teaching purposes only. A significant problem with the existing equipment is the maintenance and replacement of outdated components to ensure that they can be used effectively and productively for research purposes. Therefore, taking into account the economic conditions in the country, attracting research funding from competitive grants and institutions outside the university and public sector seems to be the most effective and realistic opportunity for improving the research infrastructure and quality. Consequently, funding for research must be increased and in this way improve the research productivity of the Department's members of staff.

The Department's scientific publications in the last 5 years demonstrate an increase in research activity compared to previous years. Although the efforts and accomplishments of the Department's members of staff can be appreciated, the base, quantity and quality of research need further improvement. The Department's active staff in research published on average 1.0 to 1.5 scientific papers per year over the last 5 years. This research performance is quite low compared to similar international, as well as, national university departments in the same subject area. The limited high-quality research in the Department is exclusively conducted by a small number of young members of the academic staff that show high productivity, engagement and initiative. Although these young researchers work with other members of staff in the Department, they predominantly collaborate with other research institutes and universities in common research projects, external to the Department.

The Department has been successful in attracting different competitive as well as non-competitive research grants in the past. However, the amount of research funding was relatively low when compared to international standards. The small amount of external funding is one important reason for the average to low quality of the infrastructure in the laboratories. However, it should be mentioned that central research support service from the university is very limited and requires improvement and development to help researchers.

Furthermore, although there is evidence for research collaboration between the different scientific sections of the Department as well as with other national universities and research institutes, a limited number of collaborative projects has been completed. There is a small number of young researchers who show high enthusiasm and interest for national and international collaborations. These young members of staff demonstrate high research quality potential as reflected by their relatively high-impact papers published.

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.

Although the Department has increased the capacity for research and in the last few years there has been an improvement both in the quantity and quality of research publications and funded projects, a cohesive research strategy with clear plans and objectives is lacking. The applied research shows a wide variety of objectives and it is not focused on specific themes or a small and sustainable number of thematic areas of current scientific interest.

The Department produced a number of peer review publications (593 from 2006 to 2010) and a small number of these papers were published in scientific journals with high impact factors. However, the average number of publications per academic staff (~1.5 per year) is low compared to international as well national standards and should be improved in the future.

There are some funded research projects but the amount of the funding is very low compared to the existing academic staff capacity. There are no externally funded research projects from European sources.

There are good and productive collaborations with other national universities and hospitals and research institutes that have resulted in good quality publications. There are also important collaborations with different European universities, however those collaborations are limited to a small number of young researchers.

The research work of the Department is mainly oriented to high-level sport performance. There is scientific work and some research projects in clinical areas as for example physiotherapy, health care and prevention but these are limited.

The research produced by the Department is to some extent visible through the national and international community. We believe that the Department should make more efforts and engage with external organisations to become visible by increasing research quality and collaborations, especially with universities abroad.

IMPROVEMENT

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

The staff of the Department recognise the need for changes in research strategy and direction in order to improve scientific output and quality. More focus on specific scientific areas of sport sciences would improve the competence of the Department and increase the possibility for international collaborations and in this way research funding. Although collaboration with other national and international research institutes and universities is evident and

supported by the Department, we believe that there is great need for increasing international collaborations. Furthermore, a better infrastructure and the integration of all laboratories within the main campus of the Department would improve the research capability and performance.

The recommendations of the EEC are the following:

1. Establishment of a Research Committee (RC)

The RC should provide and coordinate the strategic vision of the Department in a high quality research environment and assess the research quality of the proposed research projects. This committee should also establish standards in terms of research quality assurance, and publication outputs. It should also examine the scientific merit of the proposed research projects. The Committee should consist of 5-7 members with strong research experience in different scientific backgrounds and they should meet once a month and review all proposed research projects.

2. Reorganisation of research laboratories

The number of the research laboratories should be decreased with appropriate mergers and in this way the infrastructure of the resulting small number of laboratories can be improved due to avoidance of duplication of equipment considering the shortage of funding. We believe that laboratories/centres in the basic areas and disciplines of Sport Sciences only (e.g. physiology, biomechanics, psychology, social sciences and humanities) would improve the effectiveness, interdisciplinary work, and the systematic collaboration between academic staff. The interdisciplinary work and collaboration between researchers and PhD-students would enhance the research output and the quality and competitiveness of the research conducted in the Department.

3. Establishment of a Research Retreat

We recommend an annual spring or autumn retreat for scientific exchange between the PhD students and the researchers in a relaxed setting outside of the laboratory setting. This event can bring together all PhD students who will give presentations of their work and have the opportunity to discuss their research with their peers and the academic staff. The Research Committee will also be present at the retreats to monitor the overall structure, the direction and progress of the research and the development of the education structures. The presence of the RC and the critical feedback from its members is of vital importance for the quality control of research and for the promotion and the development of a research culture among students.

4. Increase international collaborations

Collaborations with different universities and research institutes around the world and especially from Europe would improve the scientific culture and the possibility for funding through calls from the European Community.

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 Department recognises the importance of the various services provided to the members of the academic community and the education and development of the students and their support is central to the Department's philosophy and aims. However, the state of the various buildings, facilities and the lack of appropriate and good quality infrastructure results in significant deficiencies in service provision. There is no specific policy on simplifying administrative procedures and in practice the means to achieving efficient and effective administrative procedures is based on developing electronic systems for submission, storage and management of the information required for the various administrative processes. Most of the processes relating to student registration, progression and services relating to book provision and medical cover are based on relevant electronic processes. This has improved the services provided to students although there is no specific policy to increase student presence on campus due to the geographical separation from the main campus and lack of University or departmental funding for such important aspects of student experience quality.

The geographical location of the Department in its own campus, away from the main campus of the University is affecting student and staff services and the quality of academic experience. Furthermore, the presence of students on campus outside their academic timetable is limited since there are no other social and recreation facilities. Limited hours of operation of the computer room and library, linked also to the lack of independent learning and studying culture, limit further the presence of students on campus. The lack of a distinct "student centre" - either in the form of a separate building or lounge - is also affecting student presence on campus. The main gathering place for students is the dining area. Students need a distinct and specially designed area - other than a dining area - to meet, socialize, discuss and relax. These are necessary developments to enhance student presence on campus yet were not evidently revealed in any departmental or university policy. The University is spending a significant amount of money to rent facilities in the locality of the campus (in blocks of flats and offices) that are neither fit for purpose nor satisfy adequately the actual academic needs of the students and staff using them. The trend in most Universities worldwide is to concentrate on single campuses in order to manage their resources more efficiently and provide a better academic environment and experience for their staff and students. The University should consider a long term estates management plan of the Faculty's significant estate, infrastructure and property in the Dafni area, with a view to moving the Faculty to the main University campus in purpose build modern buildings and sports facilities. A move to the main University campus will not only transform the quality of the academic environment and experience in the Faculty but will also enhance the provision of sport and recreational facilities and services offered by the Faculty to the whole University community.

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 Department's secretariat is very well organised and is staffed by very experience personnel that collaborate very efficiently between them as well as with members of staff the students of the Department. The secretariat is responsible for the management of the administrative processes related to all the main functions of the Department including the undergraduate postgraduate programmes, and the administrative support of the different committees, Sections, laboratories and the general assembly of the Department. The various administrative processes related to staff promotion and budget management have increased significantly in recent years but the development of electronic procedures to manage some of these processes and the dedication and experience of the administrative staff have ensured the efficient function of this important aspect of the Department's work. However, the number of administrative staff is going to be decreased from 12 to 8 with the proposed restructuring and this is going to put a lot of pressure on the remaining staff. This is particularly problematic given the increase in the large number of upcoming staff promotions and the more frequent internal evaluation and quality assurance processes that will have to be supported by the secretariat as an important aspect of the Department's function, especially given the proposed future accreditation processes.

A number of changes are needed to improve further the quality of delivery of these services in the future with the projected increase in workload linked to future requirements. The Department is currently geographically distant from the main campus and the reliance of administrative support assistance from the main campus is difficult. The building where the secretariat and the administrative staff are based is one of the more modern in the campus although disabled access is often difficult. The electronic infrastructure supporting the administrative work is outdated and requires urgent upgrading with modern systems for administrative support and electronic management software that is adapted to the special requirements and needs of the Department supported by adequate financial, training and development support of the secretariat and the administrative staff.

The departmental library collections, resources and space are limited and not commensurate with a department and University of this magnitude that operates a large undergraduate and graduate programmes in this important area of study. Three full-time librarians operate the library and the library hours of operation are Monday to Friday from 9-5. There has been electronic access material in recent years but the limited collection of periodicals and outdated resources make it difficult for graduate students to access needed resources. There is a limited number of older PCs in the library and a dedicated computer room. However, these computers are outdated and accessibility to modern computers with new electronic learning resources is required in order to enhance the quality of student education and provision. The addition of more computers and increased hours of operation of the computer room and library will be required if the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes of studies are revised to include independent learning opportunities and related study requirements. In addition, the large number of undergraduate and graduate students merits the creation of additional positions or roles linked specifically to student counselling and advising. The central University resources offered for sports and cultural activities and skill development linked to future careers are very good, yet the distance between the main campus and access to other student services in the main campus is a problem.

RESULTS

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

The administration services of the Department are generally good and efficient although communication of staff through electronic means is not always very effective. Some changes are necessary to improve services to students and academic staff: (1) increased secretarial support, (2) addition of distinct student counselling/advising positions (or peer support for example) at the undergraduate and graduate levels, (3) additional laboratory technician positions to cater for the operation of the laboratories and maintenance of equipment, (4) enhanced collection of library resources, including hours of operation, to address the needs of undergraduate and graduate students, (5) the addition of more/upgrade of older PC's in the computer room and library with enhanced hours of operation.

IMPROVEMENTS

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

The staff of the secretariat and the administrative services have identified a number of improvements that are required to improve service delivery. These have been described in detail during the presentation given and in the reports produced by the Department and the EEC supports these proposals and the efforts of the Department and the academic and secretarial staff in these directions. However, it is not clear how any feedback provided by students is taken into consideration and there is no official process for student's comments and feedback on central University and Department support services and campus related issues. Student feedback and opinions, where relevant and appropriate, need to be taken into consideration by the Department or University when planning and implementing changes.

Collaboration with social, cultural and production organizations

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

The collaborations with social, cultural, production and sporting organizations are based mainly on individual initiatives by members of academic staff that happen to sit in committees in these organisations and student activities linked to cultural activities and voluntary services, including blood donations. The quality, originality and significance of the Department's initiatives are in general improving but more emphasis must be placed on the establishment of external collaborations in particular that are currently quite limited.

The large number of alumni of this Department can also aid in help build collaborative relationship between this Department and society. Alumni in prominent social, cultural, as well as sport, public authority and political positions can help this Department in building collaborative relationships. Dialogue between and amongst the Department and key community stakeholders and future employers is evident and a strength of the Department,

but can be strengthened, formalized (as part of curriculum revision processes and committees for example) and should take place more regularly with the objective of enhancing collaborative relationships.

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 them.
- Short-, medium- and long-term goals.
- Plan and actions for improvement by the Department/Academic Unit
- Long-term actions proposed by the Department.

There are a number of external inhibiting factors that are common to all similar departments in the country and have been identified in the relevant external evaluation reports. These include the current economic condition that poses a number of significant problems and challenges for strategic planning - particularly when it comes to long term planning. Public institutions such as Universities are currently subject to economic cutbacks, restraints, and downsizing. This is an inhibiting factor for short-term strategic planning. It is important that any planning and decisions need to be carefully considered and evaluated in the context of the changing landscape in Higher Education in the country, the economic conditions and developments in other departments in the same or similar areas and fields of study.

The Department has identified the main areas requiring improvement but did not outline any clear proposals or solutions in most of the issues identified in the internal evaluation report. Where actions are proposed, these are mainly based on requesting more financial support from the University to maintain and expand the sports facilities at its Dafni campus and more financial support from the University to support the Department teaching and research work and other services. However, in the current financial situation it is difficult to see how such requests can be afforded by the University and the Department needs to have alternative plans and strategies to ensure that the funding is increased in the future not only through the University but from external sources as well. Furthermore, for a number of the issues identified in the internal evaluation report and confirmed through the external evaluation process, what is required is not financial assistance but better coordination of activities, more effective collaboration between staff from different sections and laboratories and the establishment of structural changes and processes to enhance quality and improve accountability.

In general and in common with other similar departments in the country, there was no evidence of a clear strategic plan for achieving the main objectives in infrastructure, teaching and research. However, this need is clearly recognized by the current management that plans to discuss and implement appropriate long term actions to ensure the improvement of the quality in all aspects of the Department's work and provision. These include major revisions

to the teaching curricula lead by the curriculum committee and the structure of the newly established Faculty to include Departments with appropriate pathways that are aligned with modern directions of sport, exercise and physical activity studies. The EEC supports these efforts as essential for the important long-term role that the Department needs to fulfil in the University and Greek Society in general.

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.

The Department has a very long history and tradition that can be traced to the development of physical education in the country and the introduction of the subject area in higher education. The Department has many experienced staff that is educating a very large number of students in undergraduate and postgraduate programmes. The establishment of a Faculty in the area of Sport and Exercise Sciences in the largest University in the country is a very important development for the subject area and the future of the Department. These prospects are enhanced by the attitude of the current senior management in the Department who are very energetic and are prepared to make the necessary changes for the improvement and development of the Department. These efforts in the Department must be supported by the University with a view to moving the Faculty in to the main University campus in purpose build modern buildings and sports facilities. A move to the main University campus will not only transform the quality of the academic environment and experience in the Faculty but will also enhance the provision of sport and recreational facilities and services offered by the Faculty to the whole University community.

Although the Department does not have an effective and well developed quality assurance process for teaching and research quality, there was general agreement that this is required for the future and it is essential that new committees for both curriculum and research need to be formed that will develop and oversee the continuous quality assurance processes in collaboration with the internal evaluation committee and the University's quality assurance unit.

Based on the external evaluation process, the specific recommendations of the EEC for improvements in curriculum, teaching and research are detailed in the relevant Improvement sections above and are reflected in the general recommendations below. It is recognised that the long-term structural and financial problems identified and relating to inappropriate facilities, poorly equipped main discipline laboratories, central funding and large number of students must be addressed by the relevant authorities in addition to implementing the EEC recommendations. These specific recommendations stem from the main areas of required changes for improvements in the structure, governance and academic

work in the Department:

- Modernisation of curriculum content and reduction of student lecture load with more opportunities for independent learning and development of problem-solving and critical thinking skills and more generic academic and scientific writing and research skills
- Frequent curriculum evaluation and review processes based on student feedback and external stakeholder advice overseen by a curriculum committee
- Review and improvement of teaching and assessment methods in all courses to include modern methods of active student participation through seminars, tutorials, group work and work placements to facilitate active learning
- Establishment of a monitoring and evaluation process for all academic staff that includes an annual activity report summarizing their teaching, research and other services
- Establishment of a more effective departmental structure with fewer laboratories in the main scientific disciplines of sport sciences to enhance collaboration and critical mass of researchers in specific areas only where the Departmental has research strength and expertise
- Establishment of more effective research governance and quality assurance under the guidance of departmental research committee with responsibility for research strategy and the development of a strong research environment and culture that supports young researchers and provides opportunities for the integration of all academic staff into the active research groups

The Members of the External Evaluation Committee

Name and Surname

Signature

1. Adamantios Arampatzis _____
2. Vasilios Baltzopoulos _____
3. Vasilios Vardaxis _____
4. Konstantinos Tsintzas _____