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 ΑΡΧΗ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ
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 ΣΤΗΝ ΑΝΩΤΑΤΗ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗ

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

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

DEPARTMENT OF PHYSIOTHERAPY

ALEXANDER TECHNOLOGICAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE (TEI)
 OF THESSALONIKI



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External Evaluation Committee

The Committee responsible for the External Evaluation of the Department of Physiotherapy of the Alexander Technological Educational Institute (TEI) of Thessaloniki consisted of the following five (5) expert evaluators drawn from the Registry constituted by the HQAA in accordance with Law 3374/2005:

1. Prof. Vasilios Baltzopoulos (Coordinator)
Brunel University, London, United Kingdom
2. Prof. Adamantios Arampatzis
Humboldt-University Berlin, Berlin, Germany
3. Dr Michael J. Callaghan
The University of Manchester, Manchester, United Kingdom
4. Dr Kyros Karamanidis
German Sports University, Cologne, Germany
5. Prof. Charalambos Papaxanthis
University of Bourgogne, Dijon, France

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 External Evaluation Committee (EEC) received the relevant electronic documentation from HQAA in advance of the visit. The original internal evaluation report received was based on the internal assessment in 2009 that was conducted in the Spring semester of 2008-09 and the Autumn semester of 2009-10 academic year and was, therefore, quite dated. The EEC requested an updated report and received the internal evaluation report from 2012-13 submitted to the TEI Quality Assurance Unit by the Department. There was also an additional document with some updated tables on student numbers and performance, staff numbers, scientific publications and citation indexes covering the period 2009-2013. The EEC met on Wednesday 26 February in Thessaloniki and was briefed by a member of the HQAA on the purpose of the External Evaluation process and the function of HQAA. There was also an opportunity to discuss any questions and issues raised by the EEC members.

The EEC then visited the Department of Physiotherapy in the campus of the TEI in Sindos between 26-27 February 2014. The Committee met the Deputy President of the TEI and the Director of the School of Health Professions and then visited the secretariat of the Department and various Institute and departmental facilities including the careers office and the central library, as well as the library of the School of Health professions. The EEC then visited Papageorgiou Hospital and the private rehabilitation centre 'Arogi' in the afternoon of Wednesday 26 February. These are two of the hospitals/rehabilitation centres where the final semester students are completing their practical placements. The EEC met all the students currently on placement in those two centres and their supervising physiotherapists.

On Thursday 27 February, the EEC visited the Department in the Sindos campus again and following a short briefing meeting with the Head of the Department, they were shown all the teaching and laboratory facilities of the department. This was followed by a comprehensive presentation by the Head of the Department on the internal evaluation, the curriculum and the plans for the next two years. The EEC then discussed with the members of the academic staff the curriculum, teaching and research issues as well as other general issues including public engagement and clinical practice of physiotherapy students. There were also meetings with a large group of approximately 50 students representing all years and a meeting with

the hourly-paid teaching staff that supervise the clinical practice of the students. The visit was well organised and the Department provided additional material and information during the visit, including documents describing the programme of studies, electronic copies of the presentations, and files with course information from all the academic staff. The EE Committee's view was that we had access to any material and additional information that was required for the external evaluation process and we would like to thank all the members of staff, students and clinical staff in hospitals for their hospitality, contributions and cooperation.

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?

The goals, objectives and requirements of the students' full time programme (i.e. Curriculum) for the Diploma in Physiotherapy of TEI THESSALONIKI are set out in the Department of Physiotherapy's diploma supplement 2000, the Student Handbook 2010-2011, and the Internal Evaluation Report 2013-2013. The programme requirements section states that the aim is "to educate and train students to evaluate patients" with a variety of pathologies and conditions. Furthermore, the programme aims to train students in the organisation and planning of physiotherapy treatment and rehabilitation, to promote the development and dissemination of knowledge in science and technology, which includes the discipline of physiotherapy.

The scope of professional practice is generally described in the diploma supplement as the promotion of public health and (presumably) the preventative aspects of public ill-health or illness. This takes place in a variety of clinical settings and placements which are set out in the 2012-2013 Internal report. The way these objectives are achieved is set out in the Internal Evaluation Report 2012, the student handbook and in the diploma supplement. These describe courses of general knowledge, courses of special knowledge, and courses of specialisation. In addition, there are 8 other optional courses of specialisation from which the students would choose and 'successfully attend' two. Finally, there are 2 other optional courses concerning business etc from which all students must choose and attend one. The courses of general knowledge may be recognised and described as 'Core courses' which would provide the knowledge foundation for the physiotherapy Curriculum. The Bachelor level course is of 4 year's duration, 38 weeks per year with a total workload of 6,000 hours for 240 ECTS units. Presently, each student has the responsibility to choose subjects and classes for their own curriculum which must include 24 class hours per week. The new curriculum has proposed a range from 29-32 hours per week depending on the semester.

The departmental objectives were decided by government legislation. The loose legislative framework permits the TEI academic physiotherapy staff to select and emphasise particular elements of the current curriculum according to their expertise and clinical interests. The TEI Thessaloniki physiotherapy department's mission clearly states that it is to promote the development and dissemination of knowledge in science and technology, which includes the discipline of physiotherapy. It is stated that they have developed relationships with partners within and outside of the physiotherapy department in Thessaloniki. Whilst it suggests that other external programmes were looked at, other departments do not seem to have been consulted about their experiences. Stakeholders may be from the educational or commercial

sectors, but it is uncertain if important clinical stakeholders and partners such as the hospital and clinical staff were consulted. It also states that its role is to ensure the graduates find employment in a variety of work environments. We were informed that approximately 90% of physiotherapy students find employment after graduation so this goal is achieved.

Our overall impression is that the curriculum is consistent with the objectives set out by the Department of Physiotherapy in both the Internal Evaluation Report 2012-2013 and the Student Handbook 2012. It provides an overall education for students to graduate as a general physiotherapist ready to work safely in a health care environment. Our visit to 2 clinical placements (one state hospital and one private rehabilitation clinic) revealed that the clinical supervisors were generally happy with the level of support from the TEI physiotherapy staff. This also applied to the students we met on their 6 months clinical placement. Both sets of hospital and private clinic staff thought that the students were well prepared for the placements which provided evidence that these aims of the curriculum have been successfully implemented. Private interviews with hospital, clinic staff and students revealed their satisfaction with the level of knowledge and support from the TEI physiotherapy department.

The curriculum was developed by the TEI physiotherapy department staff taking account the legislative requirements. We were able to evaluate not only the existing curriculum but to also examine and discuss the new curriculum which is due to start in September 2014. This illustrates the freedom that the academic staff have to modify the curriculum. The new curriculum was changed after internal discussions amongst the physiotherapy department staff members over a period of approximately one year. It has yet to be ratified by the TEI Thessaloniki.

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 existing curriculum is described in various publications including the Student Handbook 2012, and Curriculum and is also illustrated in several tables. The 1st semester includes courses in Human Anatomy, Pathology, Human Posture & Movement, First Aid, Bio-informatics and patient psychology. The 2nd semester contains courses in Human Physiology, Kinesiology, Therapeutic massage techniques, Orthopaedics and Bio-medical diagnostic imaging. The 3rd semester consists of courses in Kinesiotherapy, Electrotherapy, Neurology, Respiratory Physiotherapy, Ergometrics and Electro Physical Agents. As the student progresses the semesters have other more specialised and clinical subjects such as physiotherapy for Orthopaedic, Cardiovascular, Sport and Neurologic conditions. This programme displays an imbalance between what would be considered Core/ foundation subjects (Anatomy, Physiology, Kinesiology) and other that would be considered less so at undergraduate level (Diagnostic imaging, Bio-informatics).

In terms of subjects, the curriculum includes most subjects that are found in other national and international physiotherapy programmes. The course content appears to be in the

normal range for an undergraduate programme in physiotherapy and also to observe the terms of the Bologna Agreement. For example, 8 CU (credit units) in Anatomy in the 1st semester represents 105 hours of student work (see course information book).

The structure is clearly laid out in the student handbook 2012. The philosophy set out in the course is coherent. Its functionality can be judged by the balance of theory and practical elements as would befit a discipline such as physiotherapy. However, some students commented that they felt that there was not enough time for important core subjects particularly anatomy, even though this was well taught.

The department of physiotherapy in the TEI Thessaloniki has many outstanding facilities such as lecture theatres, classrooms, and, in particular, spacious practical rooms all of which have fully integrated presentation equipment. The hydrotherapy room, for example, is unique in Greece. There is a full VICON system and 2 force plates. There are treadmills and ergometers. These facilities are of a standard equal to or higher than many in other parts of Europe. Therefore, there is little to hinder the full implementation of the curriculum.

The head of the physiotherapy department has a doctorate and most of the assistant professors have obtained Doctoral degrees. The staff are appropriately qualified and very well trained to implement the curriculum. The Library had a reasonable stock of books in Greek and English languages, but few periodicals (journals). The students have free WiFi on campus to allow the use of electronic media.

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?

In general, although the curriculum is implemented to help achieve the goals and objectives of training, there are some issues and factors which need addressing because they can hinder the implementation. The students intimated to us that they feel often there was a poor ratio of professors to students which was a hindrance especially in the practical sessions. They also felt that there was a lack of structure in some teaching sessions and that some teachers were able to divert from the formal curriculum. Interestingly, the student body we talked to thought that the examination structure was relatively easy with few failing the programme. This had implications for the motivation of students to study hard in the knowledge that it was highly likely they would not fail the course. Students were happy that the curriculum was balanced between theory and practical, but they noted that if there was a lack of time, the theory would take preference over the practical sessions. Students were happy that there was critical thought contained in the curriculum, but they did not feel well prepared for the critical examination questions. Guidance for their dissertation in their 4th year is vague. Supervisors naturally choose topics according to their interests and specialities. The students confirmed that the physiotherapy department asks for and receives student feedback every 6 months. However, it seems that there is no pathway for the recommendations and feedback from the student body to be implemented.

IMPROVEMENT

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

The new curriculum for 2014 has not introduced any new subjects or courses for the Bachelor's degree. There is however, a reordering of the courses in each semester. The department should consider the balance between core medical/clinical courses and other elective course that are not essential at undergraduate level in the revised curriculum. The contact time load on the students should also be considered as well as the content of these contact hours (lectures, seminars tutorials) so that more time for structured independent study and learning is provided.

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

Based on the EEC visit to the Department of Physiotherapy in TEI Thessaloniki it can be concluded that the academic staff members are able to appropriately teach and educate the students according to the curriculum of the undergraduate program and help them develop the theoretical knowledge and the basic practical physiotherapy skills. All permanent academic staff members of the Department of Physiotherapy in TEI Thessaloniki have a great experience in teaching and practicing and are, therefore, from the practical point of view, highly competent. The teaching methods used in the Department of Physiotherapy in TEI Thessaloniki vary depending on the type of course (practical or theory-based). The practical courses are further divided into two categories: practical exercises and laboratory training. The lecturers use a variety of delivery techniques that are, in general, appropriate for both the practical and theory-based courses.

Within the eight semesters of Physiotherapy studies the School offers 42 different courses for the students. The courses are subdivided into three categories (courses of general knowledge, courses of special knowledge and courses of specialisation) and the overall topics of the courses are within international standards. Furthermore, the number of courses offered by the School is within the range of number offered by the leading Physiotherapy Schools in Europe. However, the total number of lectures, practical exercises and laboratory training hours for the students required by the Department of Physiotherapy in TEI Thessaloniki is excessively high. For each semester, the undergraduate students are required to be physically present at the School for at least 29 hours per week. For example, in the fourth semester the School offers six different courses with 14 hours lecture, seven hours practical exercise and 11 hours laboratory training. This means that the work load for the students in the fourth semester is in total about 70 hours per week (32 hours School classes and approximately 36 hours additional home work or independent work). These unrealistic requirements overload

both the School resources (staff and facilities) and the students and, thereby, leading to an ineffective and deficient teaching and learning. This problem is particular evident in the practical courses and laboratory exercises. Regarding this issue, it has to be taken into consideration also that the School is located outside the city and the students usually need at least 80 min travel time per day. The high number of recommended practical and theory-based hours per week needs to be reduced by the Department. More independent learning needs to be offered and guided by the Department. The above problems were also confirmed during our discussions with the students.

In 2012 /2013 approximately 770 undergraduate students were officially registered in the Department courses. In the same year, the Department had 25 academic staff members including 14 permanent academic members and 11 non-permanent (hourly-paid) lecturers, each having only about two hours of lessons per week. Thus, in 2013 the overall undergraduate teaching student to staff ratio was approximately 50. This student to staff ratio is too high and is not within the range of international standards for higher education. As a consequence, an adequate student to staff ratio is not currently in place in order to provide a good educational quality in teaching and learning. In particular, for the practical exercise and laboratory training the ratio is too high compared with the international standards affecting the quality of practical knowledge. Thus, in recent years the effectiveness and functionality of teaching in the Department was only possible because of the high level of engagement and dedication of the academic staff. Regarding this issue, it is important to mention that the number of registered new students for the upcoming semester in 2014 reached 157 leading to a total number of about 900 students. Furthermore, it is planned to not extend or renew the two-hours per week teaching contracts of the 11 non-permanent lectures. Therefore, the EEC board concluded that the quality of practical and theoretical knowledge for the students will significantly suffer even more in the near future if the curriculum of the undergraduate program is not adapted to this new situation and/or no additional investment in staff resources is allocated urgently.

The collaboration between the students and the academic staff of the Department as well between the students and the non-academic staff (e.g. secretarial and administrative staff) appears to be harmonious, effective and successful. The students recognise the efforts of the academic staff to improve the quality of teaching and they confirmed the good and productive relationship with both the academic and non-academic staff. Based on the discussions with students the interaction of the clinicians and/or hospital staff and the academic staff is perhaps not always appropriate and could be improved. A more frequent checking of the quality of the clinical and practical training of the students by an academic coordinator of the Department could be an appropriate suggestion.

The educational resources which are available in the Department of Physiotherapy to support the teaching and learning program are appropriate. Most of the teaching resources and facilities are adequate and generally of a very good standard. In particular, the facilities of the lecture rooms and the various scientific and practical laboratories are excellent and well equipped. However, some of the instruments for practical classes such as the electro stimulation equipment and the facilities of the physiology and anatomy class room (e.g. human dummies, software facilities such as a 3-D human anatomy and functional animation tools) for the students are needed or require upgrading in order to enhance the quality of the studies. The library is at an international level offering appropriate possibilities and learning opportunities. Many international journals are available electronically for the students allowing quick access to new scientific information. However, the working hours of the library (from 9:00 am to 15:15 pm) are in comparison to international Departments too

short. Furthermore, most students - except those students in the last two semesters - were not informed about the facilities offered by the library. It is recommended that the course "Research methods – Bioethics" in the fifth semester, should instead be provided to the students in the first or second semesters. The number and quality of free available computers in the library could be increased. This is in particular relevant for the scientific research work of the graduate students.

Concerning the resources and facilities, one of the obvious limitations of the Department is the capacity of the theoretical and some of the practical classrooms that are build for 40 to 60 students and not for 100 or even more students. This partly inhibits the students to participate regularly in the lectures and to learn and independently practice effectively the different practical physiotherapeutic methods. Moreover, there is only a limited number of independent work or social rooms for the students to spend effectively their time between the different courses which can be up to three hours. Furthermore, the lecture rooms have approximately 50 seats and are not appropriate for 80 or more students. This often hinders students to attend lectures. A great number of students were complaining during our meeting with them about these limitations and drawbacks.

In the main building of the faculty there is Wi-Fi access for all students and academic staff members. Furthermore, the e-learning software is appropriate and of a good standard. The e-learning platform seems to be used by most academic staff members. Based on the discussion with students the staff regularly upload and upgrade the required documents for their students in the last few years, including lecture presentations and literature or references.

The examination system seems to be appropriately organised and supported administratively. The course outlines are available in paper form and so it can be suggested that most students should have access to assessment details. However, the ECC board is uncertain whether all the relevant information and course outlines are available electronically such as in the Blackboard system. Furthermore, for the majority of courses the description of the course content is limited and is not clarified in detail. More specific information and extensive descriptions are required in the course documents. Furthermore, there is no detailed information of the different examination methods. In addition, examination criteria for theoretical and practical 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 practical skill areas – are defined clearly with objective criteria for each grade. This is particularly important for an effective integration of non-permanent lecturers that need to apply similar teaching and assessment standards.

In addition, the programme committee needs to also check and consider the overall examination and assessment matrix across 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 the 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

Based on the current and upcoming modified curriculum of the undergraduate program, the majority of teaching methods and techniques implemented are face-to-face lectures and practical work. The members of the EEC board noticed that there are only a few examples of tutorials or seminars. Including such teaching methods would allow the academic staff to engage with students and lead them to use the library regularly in small groups or individually and to work with the recent scientific literature. Most of the recent evidence for using certain physiotherapy approaches appears in such literature and it is important to instil the notion of evidence-based practice to any healthcare science student. This may also help to improve the student's ability for independent learning and to better prepare the students for finalizing their written thesis in the last semester. 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. Formal and structured interaction with students during lectures (e.g. class quizzes, question-answer sessions, discussion points) would also facilitate participation and engagement of students during lectures, especially in theoretical topics.

The development of the above teaching and learning initiatives requires the appropriate training and induction of academic staff to all the recent teaching and training trends and modern techniques as part of their continuous professional and educational development. Currently, there is an insufficient number and irregular didactic and pedagogic training courses and workshops for the academic staff. The Department and/or Faculty must provide training courses and workshops for academic staff on how to improve their teaching techniques using modern methods of student engagement and independent learning. Furthermore, this guidance and training for enhancing teaching methods should be compulsory and available for all academic staff members. This is particularly important for the non-permanent hourly-paid lecturers and for the newly elected lecturers.

It has to be positively emphasised that the undergraduate dissertation is compulsory for the students and all students have to present their final work in a public colloquium. This is not a standard procedure for undergraduate studies in Greece. The EEC members remarked this as a very positive procedure by the Department which is essential for a standard requirement for an undergraduate degree. However, based on the increasing number of upcoming students and lower number of non-permanent staff members in the near future it is also clear that this will cause a high workload for the academic staff members. It is recommended by the EEC that the Department should try to keep this as a standard requirement for an undergraduate degree. Perhaps a more efficient and effective preparation of the thesis is needed in terms of preparing thesis requirements by the academic staff.

In 2012 and 2013 approximately 70% of the students evaluated their courses. Student participation in the course evaluation process seems to be appropriate. However, one of the obvious problems is that there are no follow-up procedures for the implementation of changes based on the evaluation results. To our knowledge, there is no process through which the academic staff considers the results of the student evaluation aimed at improving the course content, teaching methods or any other element of course delivery. In international faculties this is usually done through an annual course review by each member of staff based on the results of student evaluation analysis. Furthermore, a permanent discussion of the procedure and the content of the evaluation processes with academic staff

and students are essential. In other words, the staff must consider the feedback of the students in order to significantly improve the quality and the effectiveness of the evaluation and their teaching. A more effective evaluation of the classes by the students is an essential element of teaching quality assurance and will help the academic staff to better reflect their teaching success.

An obvious problem that the EEC faced during their evaluation is the low number of research activities by most of the academic staff members. As a consequence, there is at the current stage no linking of own research with teaching. This drawback needs to be addressed in the near future by the Department. We encourage all members of the academic staff to make an effort to link their teaching with their research activities. This effort must be developed and improved by giving clear guidance and training to all members of the academic staff.

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 discussions of the EEC with the students indicated that the students are, in general, satisfied with the quality of their studies and educational experience. Further, the academic interaction and collaboration between staff and students seems to be appropriate. Time to graduation is approximately 5 years and is appropriate and favourable with some other similar Schools in Europe. Final degree grades are within the range - or even somewhat higher - compared to similar departments and other University School averages. These grades also probably reflect the high entry points and quality of the candidates applying to the Physiotherapy Department.

The efforts made by the academic staff in recent years to implement essential elements for the quality assurance of teaching and the effectiveness of their teaching are notable and there is evidence that the staff has already achieved a number of their goals and objectives. However, based on the discussion with the students we concluded that the quality of instruction is quite variable ranging from excellent to inappropriate or insufficient in some cases. Based on the different meetings and discussions, the EEC has clear evidence to suggest that the vast majority of academic staff members appreciate the need and have the willingness to undertake the necessary changes for improving further the teaching quality.

IMPROVEMENT

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

The staff members have undertaken notable activities for teaching quality improvements, although some variability in teaching outcomes among members of departmental staff is evident. Those staff members who have contributed to these improvement efforts need to be commended for their efforts and dedication. The recommendations proposed below by the EEC board, may be viewed as some additional guidance and suggestions aimed at helping the Department staff to better support teaching and learning and to improve the quality of

teaching in the near future. The following recommendations are proposed by the EEC:

1. Consider reducing the total number of hours for lectures, practical exercises and laboratory training for the students. For instance, the Department recommends that students participate in theoretical and practical classes in the second semester for 32 hours. That is far too much and does not give much time for the students to improve their ability for independent learning including library work and working with other sources on the subject such as books and scientific papers.
2. The hours of structured self-study or independent learning should be increased. This would reduce the load for School resources (staff and facilities) potentially leading to a more effective teaching and learning. In particular, the practical courses and laboratory praxis may benefit from such changes.
3. In order to accomplish the first recommendation, the students need to be better prepared in the courses for independent learning. It is recommended to slowly increase the ratio of directly delivered to independent learning activities in courses from the first to the last semester so that students are given time and guidance to develop these very important independent learning skills.
4. The relatively low research activity by the academic staff members has to be criticized by the EEC and needs to be changed by the Department. As a consequence of this drawback there is at the current stage no linking of own research with teaching. We encourage all members of the academic staff to make an effort to link their teaching with their research activities. This effort must be developed and improved by giving clear guidance and training to all members of the academic staff.
5. Due to the geographical location of the Department, it is essential that the students have more appropriate space to effectively spend their time between courses. This would also mean that the students should have more facilities e.g. computers and working or independent learning classrooms.
6. The evaluation process of the students for teaching quality and course content and delivery needs to be improved. A more effective evaluation of the classes by the students is an essential element of teaching quality assurance and will help the academic staff to better reflect their teaching success.
7. There seems to be no effective process through which the academic staff consider the results of the student evaluation aimed at improving the course outline, teaching methods or any other element of course delivery. This could be accomplished by an annual review by each member of staff based on the results of student evaluation analysis and may help the academic staff to better reflect their teaching success and procedures.
8. Currently there is an insufficient number and irregular didactic and pedagogic training courses and workshops for the academic staff. The Department and/or Faculty must provide and organize regular training courses and workshops for academic staff on how to improve their teaching techniques using modern methods of student engagement and independent learning. Furthermore, this guidance and training for enhancing teaching methods should be compulsory and available for all academic staff members. This is in particular important for the non-permanent and for the newly elected lecturers.
9. Specify examination criteria for all courses (practical and theory) more clearly with generic assessment criteria for the different grades and provide more detailed information concerning the content and the aims of the different courses.

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?

The department invested time and effort to promote research and encourage the academic staff to conduct research within the scientific areas and academic disciplines related to Physiotherapy and Rehabilitation. It is also clear that the department supports and promotes research participation of students. The research facilities of the Physiotherapy department include good quality and up-to-date equipment. However, only a small number from the existing laboratories are being used for examining relevant clinical research questions and for improving scientific and clinical practice. The EEC believes that the most important reason for the insufficient research output is the lack of a strategic vision for the development of an international competitive research culture in the department and the lack of cooperation and collaborations between staff members.

The department has neither a strategic plan for research with a clear vision and policy nor a coordinated process aiming to improve the research quality of the academic members of staff and their collaboration. There are no sufficient, clearly defined and adequate internal scientific standards for assessing research quality. A research committee aiming to plan, define and supervise the necessary steps for the scientific development of the department is urgently required. Research activities are currently based on individual initiatives without any coordination and planning that are based on clear research directions and strategic vision and this approach results in erratic and short-lived efforts without continuity. This approach cannot be effective and successful for high quality research in the long term.

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 is limited by several factors. The lack of a research vision and strategy for a clear research plan with the necessary support and development is the most important factor contributing to this limitation. In addition, the inability to run postgraduate (i.e. Master and PhD) programs, due to the legislative restrictions up to now, limits the participation of students in the research activities of the department. Furthermore, the limited research funding from national and international scientific calls does not allow significant improvements in research culture and quality. The department needs a rigorous increase of the external funding and the academic members of staff have to strengthen and coordinate their efforts in a collaborative manner to attract such funding.

The department has an adequate number of laboratories (6) and, if not excellent, up-to-date equipment for good quality scientific research. However, the majority of the existing laboratories have been used only for teaching and not for significant research purposes. In most of these laboratories the conditions are very good for specific research in Physiotherapy

and Rehabilitation, as for example developing of new and effective interventions in healthy and pathological groups.

The members of the department published some scientific work in national and international peer review journals. However, the scientific outcomes in terms of number and quality of publications is quite low compared to similar Physiotherapy departments internationally. The permanent active staff of the department show an average of ~0.5 to 0.7 publications per year in peer review journals which is quite low, especially given the level of laboratory facilities. Furthermore, the majority of the published work is limited to conference proceedings.

The department has successfully applied for competitive scientific funding from national as well international scientific grants in the past. However, the amount of the research funding is low compared to international standards and needs improvements. Research projects have to be more collaborative and better organized and designed. The improvement of the research strategy, research quality and scientific outcomes could be important factors contributing to successful applications for funding.

There is evidence of some collaborations within the department and with other national and international clinical and educational institutions. The EEC appreciates these collaborative activities of the department and encourages the members to develop even stronger collaborations with partners from high research quality institutions both nationally and internationally.

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 the capacity and the desire to implement changes and improve the research quality, the research outcomes are limited mainly because of the absence of a research strategy with clear plans and objectives. The EEC suggests an implementation of a research strategy focussed on specific research goals and in a small number (not more than two) of substantial thematic areas of current scientific interests and existing expertise in the department that will allow strong collaborations and focused collaborative effort.

The department efforts have yielded a number of publications in some refereed journals. However, the average number of publications per academic staff (~0.5 to 0.7 per year) is quite low for high quality national and international standards. The EEC believes that the basic requirements for improving the scientific outcomes exist and should be stimulated by creating an appropriate scientific environment that will support strategically important research areas for the department.

There are some quite successful research projects from externally funded research calls, however, the amount of the funding is low compared to the number of research active academic staff.

There are several collaborations with other national and international universities, hospitals and research institutes. The department shows a quite intensive and successful activity within the ERASMUS program (teaching and students mobility) as well as co-operations with well known international departments.

The department has good cooperation with the local hospitals, clinics and rehabilitation centres that facilitate the efficiency of the clinical practical and training of the physiotherapy students. Furthermore, the members of the department achieved two patents. However, the efficacy and production of innovative and high quality research work is low and, therefore, the scientific output and contributions of the department in topics important for physiotherapy are limited.

The department has some external visibility especially through the teaching and student mobility in the ERASMUS program within the European Community. Furthermore, the department collaborates with two Universities from the USA. However, because of the limited high quality research outputs relative to the international standards, the visibility of the department outside of Greece is not very high and should be improved.

IMPROVEMENT

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

The academic staff members of the department must improve both the quantity and quality of their research work and related outputs. These include an increase in the number and impact of the scientific publications as well as in the number and quality of grant applications. The implementation of a clear research strategy and future focused research vision would be one of the most important steps in this direction. A research focus to a maximal of two scientific areas would enhance and optimize the scientific exchange between the department's members initiating the necessary requirements for competitive and high quality research work. The competence and the visibility of the department would be improved and in this way the possibility for international collaborations and research funding will also increase. Although collaboration with other national and international research institutes and universities is evident and supported by the Department, the EEC believes that there is great need for additional collaborations with high scientific quality partners. Furthermore, the implementation of postgraduate (i.e. Master and PhD) programs in the curriculum could be an important factor for improving the research quality.

The recommendations of the EEC for the improvement in research are the following:

1. Establishment of a Research and Development Committee (R & D)

The main function of the R & D Committee is to provide the strategic vision and guidance for the development of a high quality research environment and a focused and coordinated research effort. This committee should establish standards in terms of research quality assurance, and publication outputs. It should also examine the scientific merit of the proposed research projects. The R & D committee should meet several times per semester to discuss, organize and assess the progress of the scientific work.

2. Integration of all laboratories in research

All laboratories of the department should be involved in the research. The use of the laboratories and equipment for teaching purposes is important and necessary for the physiotherapy students. However, the EEC believes that the integration of the good quality laboratories of the department in research questions would enhance the opportunities of high quality scientific work. There is strong evidence that intervention research applied to pathological groups can be meaningful for a lot of scientific questions in physiotherapy improving the scientific standards of the department. Evidence-based knowledge about the effectiveness of different interventions will also improve the quality of teaching. This kind of research can be developed in an outstanding research topic for the department.

3. Increase international collaborations

Collaborations with high level of research quality 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 has a positive view of the various services provided to the academic community, which include teaching, staff and students. The cooperation between the central Unit services (TEI) and the department (physiotherapy) services are mutually evaluated as positive. In addition, many members of the department actively participate in several central committees of the TEI (for example, research committee), and these activities improve the communication and collaboration between them. The service provided by the technical staff of the central Unit (TEI), for both administrative and laboratory needs is considered to be of good quality and relatively prompt. The academic/secretarial staff and the students are generally satisfied with the existing service level. Most of the administrative procedures are operated electronically. However, some improvements are needed. Notably, renovating the electronic equipment more often (e.g. old computers), and organizing regular seminars in new technologies from the central Unit services (TEI), not only after the initiative of each member staff, is judged important. There are 6 laboratories in the department, in which the students received their practical education. The available materials and equipment for practical training are evaluated as relevant, of good quality, and original compared with those in the other physiotherapy departments in Greece. Although the cooperation between the central Unit services (TEI) and the department's services seem effective, the recent decrease in the number of the academic staff, the amount of available grants, and the bureaucracy at central level (Ministry), make the function of the department fragile. New resources, which can be funded through national, European or international grants, may help improve this situation in the department.

The fact that the department is located inside the single campus enhances the presence of students. On the other hand, the campus is far from Thessaloniki where most of the staff and student live and this may sometimes discourage the students' presence; notably, for theoretical lessons. The existence of two libraries inside the campus (one of them specific to the Health Professions School) is a very positive element of the provision and may motivate the physical presence in the campus. Furthermore, the department has a lot of practical courses, which are mandatory, and this requirement obliges all the students to be present. However, a distinct "student centre" is missing. The main gathering place for students is the dining area. Students need a distinct area to meet, socialize, discuss and relax. A clear policy enhancing students' presence into the campus must be developed both centrally (TEI) and locally (Department of Physiotherapy/School of Health Professions).

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 of Physiotherapy is geographically inside the main campus. Thus, the reliance of administrative support assistance from the main campus is generally easy. The infrastructure and organization of the department is relevant to the day-to-day delivery of existing services. There are 2 people charged with all the administrative work and 2 technicians responsible for the technical support of the laboratories. Although services are considered to be effective, one more person could improve their quality. There are 6 laboratories in the department, which exclusively offer practical courses to the students. The academic staff and the students consider the services offered adequate. They offer a quality environment for the implementation of services to students. The laboratories can be also accessible outside the hours used for practical courses, allowing students to continue and improving their practical skills. There are 3 classrooms and 1 lecture hall that satisfy relatively well the teaching needs. The offices of the permanent academic staff are fewer than required. Most importantly there is no office for the non-permanent staff, who play an important role in the education of the students. The academic/administrative staff and the students recognize that the increasing number of students the last 4 years is an important limiting factor for the quality of teaching. This causes many problems in the theoretical lessons (available space in the classrooms) and the laboratories (available beds and number of instructors for students undertaking practical training).

There are two libraries in the campus: one general, for all the departments of the TEI and one specific for the School of Health Professions. Their services are considered as more than satisfactory by the whole academic community. Library collections and resources are sufficient and of good quality. Students have free internet access and also access to several database (Scopus etc) and scientific journals. The library staff organise seminars every year to inform students about the library facilities and usage processes and to introduce them to the use of scientific web-based data. The Library is open from 9 a.m.-3 p.m. Monday to Friday and students have access to all the needed resources, either on site, or by borrowing them out. However, there are a limited number of PCs in the libraries. The accessibility of the students to more modern and up-to-date computers is necessary.

The central Unit (TEI) resources offered for sports, cultural activities and skill development linked to future careers are very good. The 'Career's Office' provides very good professional services to the students. This office has a list of more than 1800 professionals and thus can propose several jobs to the students who have just obtained their bachelor degree. It is really regrettable that most of the sport and cultural activities, offered to the students in the past, are severely diminished or even discontinued, due to the economical situation and the reduction in the Institution's budget. This lack of services, apart from preventing students participating in cultural and social activities, makes the campus less attractive for the students. A clear policy must be developed both centrally (TEI) and locally (Department of Physiotherapy) to improve these supporting services to students.

The infrastructure and support for students with disabilities and learning difficulties is unsatisfactory and needs improvement.

RESULTS

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

The administrative services of the department are very adequate and functional. Yet, the implementation of these services requires changes to better serve the needs of students. Several actions need to take place: (1) a clear policy for encouraging the presence of the students in the campus and offering them cultural, sport, and other non-education services. (2) Think seriously how to limit the number of the students, or how to increase the available services (staff and infrastructure), because the increasing number of students is becoming a potential limiting factor for providing high quality education. (3) The addition of more/upgrade of older PCs in the computer room. (4) Think how to improve the services to students who need to work to pay for their studies. (5) Create a website to communicate all the relevant information regarding the department's activities. (6) Improve the infrastructure for the non-permanent staff and the students with handicaps, disabilities and learning difficulties.

IMPROVEMENTS

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

The department has identified a number of ways to improve service delivery. However, they are conscious that their actions are in fact limited due to the economical crisis and tried to adequately manage their services with what they have. Initiatives to improve service delivery are carried out by all staff members doing every year "more with less". The students are aware of this situation and recognize the efforts made by the department to maintain a high quality of education. It is obvious that to address certain standards necessary for service delivery in institutions of higher education learning, the aforementioned proposals are deemed as necessary actions. The department seems to have a very good reputation both inside (outcomes after discussion with students and central administration) and outside (outcomes after discussion with professionals in physiotherapy centres) the campus, and must undertake all the necessary actions, even if it seems difficult at this period, to maintain

its high quality of education. The aforementioned suggestions would aid in establishing an enhanced service delivery by this department.

Collaboration with social, cultural and production organizations

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

The department has significant, original and quality connections with external collaborators, as well as social organizations and associations. Notably, in recent years the staff of the department have initiated several collaborations with private physiotherapists and establishments, giving the opportunity to many students of the department to do their practical exercise (6 months, 8th semester) in private clinics and physiotherapy practices. This has improved the visibility of the department in the local professional network. The department also entertains important connections with several associations (Alzheimer, Parkinson etc), thus providing an important social contribution. All the members of the academic staff, and many of the students, offer their services every year to the patients linked to these associations. The department is also involved in several sport and physical activity events with healthy people or patients. These social actions enhance the role of the department in promoting public health. Many members of the academic staff are actively involved in several associations; for instance, the Hellenic Association of Physiotherapy. It is also of interest and originality that the students of the department are involved in the European network of Physiotherapist students. However, it is regrettable that the department does not communicate on all these actions effectively externally and to the wider community. It is important and urgent to establish a policy for the promotion of all these actions and to create a webpage from which the department will promote all its social and public engagement services and activities.

The department has several international collaborations with other universities that can help promote not only academic, but also cultural and professional relationships. These collaborations must be reinforced and must involve the whole academic staff. Student and academic staff exchanges, as well as more active participation in various international conferences will improve the visibility of the department.

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.

The main inhibiting factors are described in detail in the internal evaluation document and were discussed at length during the visit of the EEC. These include the increased number of students admitted by the State that are approximately 70% more than the requested intake by the department. This problem is compounded by the continuous reduction of the hourly-paid clinical staff budget in combination with the lack of any new permanent positions for academic staff and the single entry point of the whole intake in September of each academic year. The Department's view is that these developments are likely to have a negative impact on the quality of the educational experience of the students and their clinical training in addition to the ability of the academic staff to conduct research. Other inhibiting factors at the Institutional and Departmental level include the lack of any postgraduate degree programs, limited collaborations between academic staff from different areas and laboratories, limited links with social, professional and industrial organizations for initiating development and research programs, limited office space for academic and administrative staff and limited student welfare and disabled student access support.

The Department has specific short-, medium- and long-term goals stated in the internal evaluation document that include a revised curriculum, improvement of the facilities, equipment and web presence, organising of meetings, invited presentation and conferences, establishment of collaborations with Universities in Greece and abroad for staff exchanges and joint research work. The main long-term goals stated are actions to enhance the social recognition of the department through better links and interaction with government, private, public and charitable organisations for the improvement of the educational work and the professional and job prospects of the graduates and the establishment of an autonomous postgraduate programme. These goals and aspirations are all very appropriate and commensurate with the aims and mission of the Department.

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 of Physiotherapy in Thessaloniki is one of the four TEI Physiotherapy departments currently in the country, having been established since 1974 together with the Physiotherapy department in Athens. It is one of the six departments in the School of Health Professions of the Alexander TEI in Thessaloniki, and housed in a common building with three other departments from the School in the single TEI campus in the area of Sindos, approximately 17 km from the city centre. The department has approximately 815 registered

students, with ~650 active students, 14 academic staff members, two administrative staff and no permanent clinical support or technical staff. The quality of the student intake is very high with minimal entry points often exceeding 16000 (the fifth higher entry point base in the University entrance exam system) but the staff-to-student ratio is very high because of the small number of permanent academic staff members. The geographical location of the campus means that access is only viable by private cars or the infrequent public bus service leading to overcrowding and delays in peak times.

The Department of Physiotherapy provides a very good level of education and training to physiotherapy students and has very good links with local hospitals and private rehabilitation and physiotherapy practices allowing a very effective and high quality clinical practice for its students who are all very satisfied with their studies. The small number of staff are all dedicated and strive to provide a high quality education to the students although the structure and load of the curriculum place a high burden on both students and academic staff. The main weaknesses identified relate to the small number of academic staff compared to the increasing student numbers, research performance, lack of postgraduate programme of studies and no effective collaboration between different areas and laboratories. Although the Department has a very positive attitude towards improvement and the necessary changes, the required structures and processes have been lacking up to now and the internal evaluation process and student feedback was not acted upon in a structured and efficient manner in order to lead to improvements. This problem was discussed in detail and the Department is fully aware of the systems and processes that need to be implemented as part of a robust quality assurance system for its functions and services.

A number of detailed recommendations were made for the improvement of the teaching and research quality in the above relevant sections. The final general recommendations of the EEC are the following:

- Increase in the number of permanent academic staff and reduction of the intake of students to improve the student/staff ratio and improve the quality of education
- Develop a postgraduate programme of studies if additional members of staff are employed
- Improve the balance between core medical/clinical courses and other elective course in the revised curriculum. The contact time load on the students should also be improved as well as the content of these contact hours so that more time for structured independent study and learning is provided
- Revise the content of courses and curriculum based on feedback received from students and external stakeholders as part of a well structured system of quality assurance
- Improve the information provided to students about course content, examination and assessment processes and grading guidelines and procedures
- Provide continuous professional development opportunities to academic staff and students
- Develop a research strategy and structures to guide and develop research activity and collaborations in order to improve research performance.

The Members of the Committee

Name and Surname	Signature
1. V. Baltzopoulos	
2. A. Arampatzis	
3. M. Callaghan	
4. K. Karamanidis	
5. C. Papaxanthis	