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ΑΝΩΤΑΤΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ	AGENCY FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES

Hellenic Open University

February 2014



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External Evaluation Committee

The Committee responsible for the External Evaluation of the School of Humanities of the Hellenic Open University consisted of the following three (4) expert evaluators drawn from the Registry constituted by the HQAA in accordance with Law 3374/2005:

1. **George Philippou**, Professor (retired), University of Cyprus & University of Nicosia (Coordinator)
2. **John Spiridakis**, Professor, St. John's University, New York, USA
3. **Panayiotis Angelides**, Professor, University of Nicosia, Cyprus
4. **Constantin Canavas**, Professor, Hamburg University of Applied Sciences, Germany

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

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

Introduction

I. The External Evaluation Procedure

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) visited the School of Humanities (SOH), Hellenic Open University (HOU) during the period of February 3 – 5, 2014. The EEC received the Department’s Internal Evaluation Report (IER) on 18th January 2014.

During the first day of the visit, EEC members attended an orientation and briefing at the HQA offices from 9:30 to 11:00 am to set the stage and provide contextual information on the role of the committee.

The program of the visit was the following:

Monday, Feb 3rd Meeting with the President of the Governing Body of the University, the Dean and Associate Dean of the SOH, and the Secretary of the HOU. The President presented the history and the structure of the university. The briefing from the President was followed by constructive discussion on a range of issues associated with resources and other administrative issues at the HOU. This discussion was situated in the general context of the Greek Higher Education landscape, which in recent years has been characterized by severe budget cuts and restructuring due to austerity measures and legislation changes.

Meeting with the Research Teaching Faculty of the SOH.

The EEC attended presentations from the following personnel:

- A. Lionarakis (Operation and functioning of on-line education of HOU)
- M. Xenos (Unit of Internal Evaluation and Unit of Quality Assurance)
- A. Kameas (Laboratory of Educational Material and Teaching Methodology)

Tuesday Feb 4th

Meeting with the faculty of the SOH.

EEC attended presentations from the following faculty:

- V. Hatzinikita (Dean, SOH)
 - V. Kaldis (Studies in European Civilization)
 - A. Balta (Studies in Greek Civilization)
 - D. Philippis (Hispanic Language and Civilization Studies)
 - V. Hatzinikita (Master in Education)
 - A. Kokkos (Master in Adult Education)
 - N. Sifakis (Master in Teaching English as a Foreign Language, Master in Teaching German as a Foreign Language, Master in Teaching French as a Foreign Language)
 - K. Agoras (Orthodox Theology Studies)
-
- Meeting with Faculty, Directors of Study programs, Coordinators of thematic Units – modules, and Collaborating Academic Personnel (CAP).

Wednesday Feb 5th

- Visit to the University library, meeting with the library director.
 - Visit to the center of handling educational material.
 - Meeting with the administrative staff
 - Meeting with Special Laboratory Personnel
 - Meeting with students and graduates:
 - Undergraduate students (10)
 - Postgraduate students (Masters and Ph.D.) (15 students)
 - Recent graduates (3)
-
- Meeting with the administrative staff
 - Meeting with Special Laboratory Personnel

In addition to the IER, the EEC requested and examined a number of additional documents including the following:

- Faculty CVs
- Programs of Study
- Course syllabi
- Sample of student assessments
- Master and PhD theses
- Examination papers
- Student projects
- Copies of slides of all presentations prepared by SOH faculty in anticipation of our visit.

II. The Internal Evaluation Procedure

The Internal Evaluation Committee (IEC) delivered the updated Internal Evaluation Report (IER) for the academic year 2010-2011, following the guidelines provided by the Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency (HQA). The report included the basic information and evidence required in order to fulfill its objectives. Finally, during the review process all SOH faculty members willingly provided all information that was required by the EEC.

Overall, the global set of sources and documentation provided was appropriate, containing multiple and complementary types of information. The attitude of the IEC and the complete School was very positive towards providing all necessary information and evidence to the EEC. On the other hand, the internal evaluation process was completed in a satisfactory way according to the guidelines provided by the HQA.

The EEC reviewed the School's curriculum, teaching, research and infrastructure, reported on in the sections which follow, based on the data and information in the Internal Evaluation Report, course outlines, above-noted materials, and faculty and student interviews.

A. Curriculum

Undergraduate Programs

APPROACH

The SOH offers three Undergraduate Programs of Study:

Studies in European Civilization

The main aim of this program of study is to offer knowledge around the development of Europe and its culture.

Studies in Greek Civilization

The main aim of this program of study is to offer knowledge around the development and the particular characteristics of Greek Culture and its diachronic contribution.

Hispanic Language and Civilization Studies

The main aim of this program of study is to offer special knowledge in Hispanic language as well as the understanding of its development and the culture of the Hispanic peoples.

Graduates of this program may obtain teaching certification. Notably, HOU offered the first such program in Greek higher education.

The Program of undergraduate studies is organized into 12 modules. Each module is equivalent of 20 ECTS. For each module students receive educational material for the whole year and they prepare and submit four assignments. The assignments are corrected, marked and returned to students with comments (30% of the final grade). Apart from the assignments the students are taking a final and a repeat exam at the end of the year (70% of the final grade). Furthermore, the students are expected to attend 5 four hour face-to-face meetings with the instructors. The meetings are organized in 9 different places in Greece.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Curriculum is to a large part knowledge-based. The curriculum is rational and clearly articulated. Furthermore, it is coherent and functional. The majority of the required courses are in line with international recommended practices.

Each module is undertaken by a different member of the academic personnel. The coordinator of each module meets the academic personnel of each module three times a year for coordination purposes.

The EEC acknowledges the efficiency of the procedures for implementation of the programs and also that the School is making efforts for improvement and updating of the curriculum.

RESULTS

The EEC found that there is a good alignment between the predefined goals and objectives of the curriculum and its subsequent implementation. The hard work of the faculty members, technical and secretarial staff of the SOH to achieve the aims and objectives of the curriculum under difficult circumstances is evident.

IMPROVEMENT

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

Several areas of the curriculum that need to be improved have been both stated in the IER and identified during the meetings of the EEC with the faculty members of the SOH. The EEC suggests that the SOH should review the correspondence of each module to the number of ECTS.

The IER notes that certain aims of the school are not satisfactorily met because the desired and necessary updating of the curriculum and materials, for example, are not able to be implemented on a timely basis because of the bureaucratic processes of the University as well as the Ministry of Education.

Graduate programs

APPROACH

The SOH offers the following six graduate Programs of Study:

Master in Education

The aim for this program is the provision of specialized pedagogical knowledge to educators and other graduates who intent to become teachers.

Master in Adult Education

The aim for this program is the provision of specialized knowledge and the development of skills in order to be able to design, organize and evaluate programs of adult education and to implement them.

Master in Teaching English as a Foreign Language

The aim for this program is the provision of specialized knowledge to the English language graduates.

Master in Teaching German as a Foreign Language

The aim for this program is the provision of specialized knowledge to the German language graduates.

Master in Teaching French as a Foreign Language

The aim for this program is the provision of specialized knowledge to the French language graduates.

Orthodox Theology Studies

The aim for this program is the provision of specialized knowledge related to Orthodoxy to priests and graduates of other programs.

All Graduate Programs, as well as research carried out by Ph.D. candidates, are consistent with the objectives of the School and meet the entire range of its mission as defined by the law.

All six programs accept graduate students from other academic fields. The School accepted for the academic year 2013-14 about 1200 graduate students. The programs select and admit students through a lottery system. The SOH receives a large number of applications.

The master thesis is a research project carried out under the supervision of one of the faculty members or a collaborating faculty member.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Program of Graduate Studies is organized into 4 modules plus the Master thesis. Each module is equivalent of 22 ECTS and the master thesis is equivalent of 32 ECTS.

For each module students receive educational material for the whole year and they prepare and submit four assignments. The assignments are corrected, marked and returned to students with comments (30% of the final grade). Apart from the assignments the students are taking a final exam at the end of the year (70% of the final grade). Furthermore, the students are expected to attend 5

four hour face-to-face meetings with the instructors. The meetings are organized in 3 different places in Greece.

In order to undertake the master thesis students have to complete all four modules.

RESULTS

The curriculum implementations for the Master's programs are described in detail in the internal evaluation report. All Master's programs focus on innovative research and educational practices and accredit research and professional skills. The Committee met graduate students who expressed their appreciation for the quality of teaching, the competent supervision and the practical value of the acquired knowledge.

Doctoral studies

The doctoral program of the School follows the line of the traditional continental European doctorate that consists of individual research conducted by the candidate in close collaboration and exchange with her supervisor. The EEC encourages the SOH to establish research seminars, a space of open exchange between the candidates and scholars from other institutions in Greece and abroad.

B. Teaching

APPROACH:

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

First, the SOH has developed a unique and responsive instructional policy based on the Open University model. The instructional approaches associated with SOH programs were developed through the pioneering effort of the initial core SOH faculty members. The SOH adopted and adapted an Open University a hybrid curriculum and instructional model with the mission of serving a "distant" learner residing in remote areas of Greece and unable to attend face to face class sessions on a weekly basis. The creation of "modules" that each subsumed the content of three traditional courses over a ten month period with only five four-hour class meetings necessitated a "self-directed" pedagogical approach combined with "tutoring" pedagogy. Initially, the pedagogy reflected a "correspondence" style of faculty-student interaction along with traditional face to face classroom sessions. Currently, this pedagogical model has evolved with the assistance of a more dynamic and effective DL pedagogy. Professional Development sessions both online and face to face in DL approaches have been instituted for all faculty members, coordinators and module

instructors.

Second, the programs each subsume pedagogical policies unique to their specific disciplines. For example, the Program in Adult Education includes the pedagogy of “transformative learning” and “visible learning”. The Program in Teaching English as a Foreign Language is based on critical pedagogy and “reflective teaching” practices. Other programs include more traditional and curriculum-centered pedagogies based on the perceived demands of their disciplines and time frames.

Teaching methods used

Methodology for maximizing student learning included embedded directives in the curriculum materials, for completing regular exercises based on readings and research, tutoring approaches that included telephone contact and later email communication to respond to questions from students or to alert students regarding important dates, and, finally, a variety of classroom instructional approaches that are employed during the face to face weekend meetings with students. The pioneering SOH faculty members developed the initial methodological structure for all programs of study based on the unique characteristics of the “adult learner” population the SOH intended to serve.

The core curriculum and materials for each program include reflection questions/exercises and answer keys or sections that students are expected to study and analyze alone but with the opportunity for telephone tutoring by the module instructor. This format of study was necessary to serve a student body representing remote areas of Greece as well as urban areas. The SOH programs’ structure has been developed, refined and modified in accordance with changes and progress in the DL component of the curriculum.

Different programs, however, have chosen different specific pedagogies noted in the above section. Programs in language have taken different paths. Certain programs emphasize self-reflective instructional practices in teaching language. For example, the graduate Teaching English as a Foreign Language and Adult Education programs focus on the reflective teaching practices, in addition to structural elements of language. Other programs in SOH stress the curricular aspects and involve exercises and the monitoring and evaluating of student assignments that subsume such elements.

Face to face classroom sessions enable different levels of interaction based on the responses of the faculty interviewed by EEC members.

The IER indicates a panoply of traditional and innovative instructional methods used in theoretical courses and courses including practice and critical pedagogical approaches including lectures, discussions and interactive student activities. The variety of methodologies is geared to accommodate the “adult learner” type of student as well as the cognitive, linguistic and, in certain

cases, affective components of learning.

Teaching staff/student ratio

The IER and interviews established an academic staff/student ratio of about 1:17. This ratio includes the supervising faculty members and numerous contracted part-time faculty members. The SOH cannot control the number of students assigned to a given program by the Ministry of Education, but it does have the ability to control the number of students registered to each module offered by the SOH each year. There is a cap of 30 students per class. This situation is a highly unique and positive feature of the SOH. However, considering the elected faculty members, there is still an untenable situation. Fifteen faculty members must direct nine different programs and supervise approximately 800 contractual instructional personnel.

- Teacher/Teacher/Student collaboration

The Dean, Associate Dean and Supervising program faculty members have established a culture of collaboration in the SOH. Regular meetings are held in which faculty members discuss their own research and projects as well as the curriculum and instructional issues affecting their programs, modules and instructional staff.

The instructors of program modules, as per the pedagogical policies of the SOH, maintain regular communication with each student during the delivery of the course modules. The tutoring facet is an essential ingredient enabling students to obtain instant feedback from instructors by telephone or email. In addition, the SOH has structured a hierarchy for student advisement issues. Students may contact an instructor's supervisor, or the program coordinator, or the Dean's office, in addition to contacting the module instructor. Faculty members of the SOH are available to students before, during, and after each semester.

The EEC's interviews of faculty, current students and graduates of the SOH affirmed the diligence of the faculty in responding to and collaborating with students. The dedication of the faculty and appreciation of the students was palpable during our discussions and interviews.

- Adequacy of means and resources

The SOH Use of information technologies:

A part and parcel of the delivery of instruction for SOH is the DL pedagogy. The EEC reviewed the website, syllabi and materials available online through the Moodle platform chosen by the university. SOH students have access to their modules through Moodle. They also have access to curriculum materials through CDs created by the faculty members with the support of the talented technology sector personnel of the OH. Library resources are also available online to enhance the instructional process.

- System of evaluating student achievement: papers and written exams

Students are required to complete and submit four papers during the year (30% of the final grade). They are also assessed through a written exam at the end of each module, at the end of the semester (70%), as required by Greek legislation.

- Faculty Development

The EEC notes the SOH's emphasis on helping faculty members acquire the latest knowledge and skills associated with the DL and Open University models of education. Guest speakers with expertise in these areas have conducted lectures and seminars on these topics at the invitation of the SOH administration.

IMPLEMENTATION

- Quality of Instruction

The SOH students have reported general overall satisfaction with the quality of instruction by the instructors through their module evaluations. This general satisfaction, and in some cases highly enthusiastic satisfaction, was affirmed during the student interviews conducted by EEC members.

Certain students did express the desire for more opportunities to practice the methods of foreign language teaching and for the instructors to focus more on the practical elements of teaching.

- Quality and adequacy of teaching materials and resources.

The EEC reviewed the voluminous array of curricula, textbooks and teaching materials used in modules. The materials have been created by the faculty members in collaboration with outside consultants and other outside faculty members serving as coordinators, supervisors and instructors. The richness and value of the curricula and materials for teaching were evident, and their efficacy could be attributed to the expertise for those involved in their development. The needs of the adult learner students required careful attention in the preparation of materials. The creativity of the faculty was also evidenced by the CD resources many developed after going through training and consulting with the technology sector of the University.

- Linking of research with teaching

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

- Mobility of academic staff and students

The SOH mission is to reach and educate the many Greek citizens who were unable to participate in the traditional Greek higher education experience. The education received by the SOH students has resulted in greater educational and career opportunities for many, it seems. Graduates of the

undergraduate program have gone on for an advanced degree. Graduate program students have gone on, in some cases, for to pursue the doctoral degree either at HOU or another Greek university. The ERASMUS is a difficult option for most of the SOH students who are older and different, in many cases, than the traditional Greek college student. Nonetheless, in the current economic climate, such global participation could be a valuable adjunct to the mission of the SOH.

The faculty, including the full-time faculty and the outside faculty members, are involved in a variety of important national and international organizations. These connections have also spawned an array of funded projects that involve research and collaboration among faculty members and students.

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

The student evaluation form is online and it is a comprehensive one, covering every facet of a module, including instruction. The response rate has been above average. The results of the student evaluations are analyzed statistically and the results are used by the supervising faculty to make decisions concerning revision of module and retention or further professional development of instructional staff members. Feedback from results emerging from a statistical analysis of this survey is provided to the faculty members.

RESULTS

- Efficacy of teaching

The SOH has developed a unique and responsive instructional policy based on the Open University model. The EEC believes that the instructional approaches of the SOH full and part time faculty members are effective and, in some cases, highly engaging. This was documented statistically in the IER-based evaluative surveys of courses and staff, and was confirmed by the SOH students during the EEC interviews with students and faculty members.

Another significant activity of the SOH faculty is the use of analyzed module evaluation results each year to select a different contract faculty member if warranted.

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

The EEC has not noticed any such discrepancies.

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

The number of students completing the program within the expected time period has varied over the years.

IMPROVEMENT

The IER, as well as extensive meetings with the Dean, Associate Dean and supervising faculty members, reveal the desire to implement many planned modifications to programs, modules and manner of delivering instruction. The essential changes sought, that will, in turn, positively impact and enhance delivery of instruction, are impeded by the slowness of the University and Ministry of Education approval process involved.

The SOH should continue its important deliberations regarding the use of technology and DL in the delivery of instruction. The students enrolled who have difficulty in attending all face to face classes, for example, could benefit from more online interactive opportunities. The efforts of the SOH to strengthen and refine the preparation of both students and faculty in utilizing the website for the modules, is of great importance. The opportunities for “peer learning” embedded in the module website should be exploited to the fullest. Instructional methods as well as all content and materials for each program module should continue to be reviewed to assure student engagement. This will provide students with the faculty members and students greater flexibility in their teaching and learning and could enhance faculty-student engagement.

Faculty members and instructors have also stressed the need for training seminars (focusing on writing essays, etc.) especially to help students perform more effectively in undergraduate courses. The EEC agrees on the importance of implementing such an initiative.

C. Research

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

APPROACH

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

The School’s policy for research and development reveals three major objectives: (A) Participation of the School members in national and international research and development projects. (B) Organisation of scientific conferences. (C) Publication of scientific research journals. (D) Publication of scientific monographs. The research areas depend on the fields covered by the orientation of the programs of studies. A special focus of these activities lies on Distance Learning.

In addition, the SOH program directors lead program based “research units” that involve the collaboration of the program faculty members. These units seek to identify and conduct research and projects with the aim of improving each program.

IMPLEMENTATION

- How does the SOH promote and support research?

School members are supported to conduct scientific research and to participate in national and international research projects (e.g. budget for developing research proposals). Further, the SOH encourages academic members to collaborate with other researchers in Greece and abroad, and to include graduate students in the collaborations. A large part of the research is connected to the work conducted by the graduate and post-graduate students.

A considerable amount of research output produced individually by faculty members appears in scientific journals, monographs, conference proceedings etc.

- Quality and adequacy of research infrastructure and support.

The University Library provides support for access to national and international data bases. However, further technical infrastructure is limited, so that the researchers use their own infrastructure units.

- Scientific publications.

Several scientific journals are published regularly in the fields covered by the programs of study (e.g. *Open Education: The Journal for Open and Distance Educational Technology* since 2005, *Epistimoniki Epithorisi tou Metaptychiakou Programmatos* “*Spoudes stin Orthodoxi Theologia* since 2010, as well as an international peer-reviewed journal “*Research Papers in Language Teaching and Learning*”, since 2010).

- Research projects.

Research projects have been implemented in European frames (e.g. HERAKLEITOS II/ESPA for supporting postgraduate research and dissertations). Several faculty members have secured and direct various significant projects funded by national and international organizations.

- Research collaborations.

Scientific collaborations have been implemented with outside agencies and institutions such as Museums (e.g. Benaki Museum), as well as with the Archaeological Services. As noted earlier, the faculty supervising programs collaborate with their program faculty members and, in some cases, their students to conduct research.

RESULTS

- How successfully were the Department’s research objectives implemented?

In a general frame, the SOH has succeeded in implementing the research objectives.

- Scientific publications.

The SOH provides a list of the results of the research projects and publications of the School members. During the last 2 academic years, the members of SOH published, on the average, a significant number of books/monographs (totally 7 in the years 2010-2011), papers in journals with a referee system (over 16 per year in the years 2010-2013), and papers in conference-proceedings with a referee system (over 12 per year in the years 2010-2013), chapters in books, and also to non-refereed conferences (a considerable number). This provides an indication that the SOH encourages research and supports its faculty members to publish their work. Certain publications involve collaboration among faculty members and in some cases with individuals outside of the department. There is a varying degree of output in the years 2010-2013. The EEC recommends that publications in international journals with a peer review system should continue to be given high priority as this will contribute to the establishment of international collaborations and enhance the standing and reputation of the SOH.

- Research projects.

From the list of research projects provided in the SOH it is evident that the faculty members participate in a notable number of projects – both in basic and applied research. These projects are quite heterogeneous – a fact that reflects the large spectrum of scientific areas covered by the SOH members.

- Research collaborations.

There are a considerable number of productive research and grant collaborations in the SOH as evidenced by the publications.

- Is the Department's research acknowledged and visible outside the Department? Rewards and awards.

The research of the SOH is both acknowledged and made visible outside the SOH through scientific publications, conference presentations, exhibitions, professional meetings, and through the departmental website.

The internal SOH evaluation provides with information about citations of the members' publications. The EEC suggests that international collaboration and dissemination of research findings and development results should be encouraged.

IMPROVEMENT

- Initiatives in this direction undertaken by the Department.

The heterogeneity of the research areas and methods in the SOH demands for more diversified future strategies.

The stronger linking of Orthodox Theology Studies with further research areas or the stronger interchange among the programs of Studies in Greek Civilization, Studies in European Civilization, and Hispanic Language and Civilisation Studies should be encouraged.

The frame and the themes that characterize SOH programs present a solid basis for empirical research that is much needed in the field of teaching and education. Starting with its own programs and courses the Department could pioneer research that empirically identifies significant learning goals and studies the factors that contribute to the attainment of learning outcomes associated with those goals for various types of students over time.

The ability of the SOH to generate teaching publications has been well established. The EEC recommends that faculty members now emphasize the (necessary) continuous actualisation of the teaching material, as well as on quality over quantity in their research efforts turning attention to specific targets such as applying for research grants so they are not limited to the resources provided by the State.

The IER provides information about citations of the members' publications. The EEC recommends more emphasis on publications in recognized international publications.

The EEC does recognize however that the appropriate support by the research office of the HOU should be provided to the SOH. The EEC believes that the great energy, enthusiasm and on-going innovation that characterize this department present a good investment opportunity worth of support by the research office of the SOH.

The EEC encourages continued national and international collaboration and dissemination of research findings and development results.

D. All Other Services

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

APPROACH

The Department's administrative services are efficient and serve the needs of the students. Electronic processing of procedures is used for student enrolment, while most of the administrative tasks are performed electronically.

IMPLEMENTATION

Organization

The EEC notes that despite the huge volume of work, the limited SOH administration and staff operate in an efficacious manner.

Infrastructure

- Library. The EEC visited the library of the University. The HOU runs a distance access library and information service. The main objective of the library is to support all processes that are central to facilitating distance learning and research at the HOU. The building of the library is small. The book and journal (hard copies) collection is somewhat limited. This is likely due to chronic lack of funding.

However, most importantly for the “distant” student body, the electronic data bases and e-journals are at a good level. Moreover, students have free access to the vast holdings of the University of Patras library. The EEC is concerned with the adequacy of needed new technologies that the IER also articulates. An Open University should be using the state-of-the-art technologies.

- Digital Tools/Internet. Access to computers and other digital technologies is very satisfactory. However, besides the computer lab, which is used for instructional purposes, students have access only to a small number of computers in the library. There is wireless internet connection in the building. The department has started to make use of the e-class platform, which allows students to access materials, PowerPoint presentations and to engage in online discussions. The e-class could be used more widely when the number of students does not allow personal tutor-student contact.
- Facilities. The EEC notes that the administration and faculty occupy a recently built building that seems adequate and functional for the present size and needs of the SOH.

RESULTS

The administrative services are adequate and functional. The responsibilities of administrative staff were clearly delineated and distributed among the staff. There was good morale and a willingness to work to get the job done.

IMPROVEMENTS

The improvement of the efficiency of library on-line services and improved use of the on-line platform would result in move away from the over-reliance on hard copy educational materials. The Distance Learning mission embraced by the SOH requires such improvement.

Collaboration with social, cultural and production organizations

A School like SOH is asked to play a multifaceted role within the Open University and the wider area of Greece. The SOH has established significant connections and relationships with other universities as well aforementioned cultural institutions.

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.

The SOH has developed a clear strategic plan for extensive change through certain modifications. However, the plan for change is impeded significantly by the bureaucratic structure in place. The EEC's interviews with the faculty made clear the SOH's plans to modify curricula, materials and to introduce new graduate programs.

In addition, the SOH has continually sought to refine the faculty's competence and confidence in delivering the most effective and engaging instruction through DL approaches.

The SOH has recently obtained the approval for installing a Chair of UNESCO at the Studies in European Civilization (European Civilization: Political and Historical Challenges and Prospects). The SOH should be encouraged to continue its efforts in implementing this perspective.

The SOH has already submitted several proposals for further development by introducing new graduate programs. Despite the fact that the faculty members of the SOH have a good cooperation between them it is clear that the aims of the school can be divided into two areas: humanities and educational studies. It seems that the school could be divided into two homogeneous schools in order to function in a more productive way.

F. Final Conclusions and recommendations of the EEC

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

Recommendations

The EEC would like to express its gratitude to the SOH for its cooperation, honesty, professionalism and hospitality. The evaluation was conducted within a climate of utmost respect and collegiality.

The EEC acknowledges that the University in general and School in particular comprise a significant institution that serves the critical educational needs of a marginalised part of the society in Greece that doesn't have access to higher or further education.

The EEC recommends the following:

1. The curriculum and materials of most programs of study were developed some years ago. The SOH is keenly aware that the curriculum and materials of the SOH programs need to be revised and updated. In this regard, the current time frames in place do not enable the SOH to implement their planned updated and modified programs that reflect the latest DL approaches as well as changes in content in the various program disciplines.
2. The EEC agrees with the IER request for a significant increase in the number of elected academic members in the SOH. The existing number of 15 members is not adequate to serve and manage the existing number of programs, contract faculty and students. There are some programs of study for which there is no elected faculty member.
3. The EEC agrees with the SOH's plans to structure and implement a more dynamic and effective use of the DL approaches to delivery of instruction. Peer learning can be increased through the platform.
4. The EEC recommends the continued advancement of the Moodle platform for delivering instruction more effectively and learning how to use the platform technology. For example, additional online student orientation to the programs and modules; on-line DL learning strategies for faculty and students; online literacy and writing skills development; use of interactive online forums for students to

participate in to enhance “peer-learning” in the modules; online doctoral research forums to share ideas.

5. More module materials should be accessible electronically to minimize the need for transmission of hard copies.
6. The EEC agrees with the IER that the lottery system of selecting graduate students should be reconsidered.
7. The EEC recognizes the value of faculty development initiatives in implementing optimal DL approaches by the SOH and recommends the continuation of such preparation both in person and online.
8. Funding should be increased to support vital academic research and project development. Similarly, the EEC would encourage faculty to continue to identify and apply for funding to engage in research leading to publications in recognized journals.

The Members of the Committee

Name and Surname

Signature

1. Prof George Philippou

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2. Prof John Spiridakis

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3. Prof Panayiotis Angelides

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4. Prof Constantin Canavas

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