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

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

HELLENIC OPEN UNIVERSITY

DECEMBER 20th 2013



TABLE OF CONTENTS

The External Evaluation Committee

Introduction

I. The External Evaluation Procedure

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

II. The Internal Evaluation Procedure

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

A. Curriculum

APPROACH

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

IMPLEMENTATION

- Rationality, functionality, effectiveness of the Curriculum.

RESULTS

- Maximizing success and dealing with potential inhibiting factors.

IMPROVEMENT

- Planned improvements.

B. Teaching

APPROACH:

- Pedagogic policy and methodology, means and resources.

IMPLEMENTATION

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

RESULTS

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

IMPROVEMENT

- Proposed methods for improvement.

C. Research

APPROACH

- Research policy and main objectives.

IMPLEMENTATION

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

RESULTS

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

IMPROVEMENT

- Proposed initiatives aiming at improvement.

D. All Other Services

APPROACH

- Quality and effectiveness of services provided by the Department.

IMPLEMENTATION

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

RESULTS

- Adequateness and functionality of administrative and other services.

IMPROVEMENTS

- Proposed initiatives aiming at improvement.

Collaboration with social, cultural and production organizations

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

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

F. Final Conclusions and recommendations of the EEC on:

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

External Evaluation Committee

The Committee responsible for the External Evaluation of the School of Social Science of the Hellenic Open University consisted of the following five (5) expert evaluators drawn from the Registry constituted by the HQAA in accordance with Law 3374/2005:

1. **Professor George Nakos**, Professor of Marketing, College of Business, Clayton State University, Morrow, USA (Coordinator)
2. **Professor Elias Dinenis**, Rector of Neapolis University, Pafos, Cyprus
3. **Professor Dimitris Vrontis**, Dean, Distance Learning Director, Unit of Graduate Studies in Business University of Nicosia, Nicosia, Cyprus
4. **Professor Athanasios Hadjimanolis**, Professor of Management/Marketing, School of Business Administration, European University Cyprus, Cyprus
5. **Professor Evangellos Dedoussis**, Associate Professor of Management, School of Business Administration, American University in Dubai, Dubai

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

- **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?**

Dates and brief account of the site visit.

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) visited the School of Social Sciences of the Hellenic Open University between the 16th and the 18th of December 2013. On Monday 16th December 2013, the Committee visited the HQAA’s headquarters in Athens where it was briefed by Mr. Economou of the HQAA on how to conduct the evaluation.

Following that, the Committee visited Open University’s Athens Office on December 16th, 17th and 18th and had meetings with the President of the Governing Board, Professor Charalambos Coccusis, the Dean of the School of Social Sciences Professor Dimitrios Giannias, the Vice-Dean of the School of Social Sciences Professor Dimitrios Vasiliou, the full-time Faculty members, the Directors of the study programmes (except the MBA Programme that had been evaluated earlier by a different committee), The Module Coordinators from all study programmes, instructors of courses, postgraduate students and undergraduate students from different years of study.

During the meetings each Programme Director made a short presentation of the programme under review. For each programme the Director’s report focused on the programme’s aim and scope, the structure of the programme, the educational material that was used, and the educational methodology followed for attaining the prescribed learning outcomes. For each of the reviewed programmes, the Director of the programme was accompanied by the Module Coordinators and other teaching faculty. Following each programme presentation, the Committee had a short discussion with the teaching staff of the programme under review. This review procedure was followed for all the programmes reviewed.

Whom did the Committee meet ?

On Monday December 16, 2013 the Committee met with:

- The Dean of the School of Social Sciences, Professor Dimitrios Giannias,
- The vice-Dean of the School, Professor Dimitrios Vasiliou,
- Professor George Agiomyrgianakis
- Professor Apostolos Gerontas
- Professor Dimitrios Niakas
- Associate Professor Charalambos Anthopoulos
- Professor Dimitrios Asteriou
- Associate Professor Ioannis Kehagias
- Associate Professor Athanasios Mihiotis
- Assistant Professor Augoustinos Dimitras
- Lecturer Dr Maria Kontochristou
- Professor Nikolaos Blesseos
- Dr. Michael Evripiotis, Assistant Module Leader
- Professor Dimitris Karalekas
- Dr. Nikolaos Vitantzakis
- Associate Professor Panagiotis Trivellas
- Dr. Panagiotis Choundalas, Portal Officer
- The Directors of the 5 programmes under evaluation 3 of whom are full-time faculty members of the School. The other two Programme Directors are full-time faculty members of at other Universities:
 - Professor Dimitrios Giannias, Dean and Director of the undergraduate programme in Business Administration
 - Professor Dimitrios Vasiliou, Director of the postgraduate programme in Banking
 - Professor Dimitrios Niakas, Director of the postgraduate programme in Health Care Management
 - Professor Paris-Georgios Tsartas, Director of the postgraduate programme in Tourism Business Administration, Professor at the University of the Aegean.
 - Associate Professor Philimon Bantimaroudis, Director of the postgraduate programme in Cultural Organizations Management, Associate Professor at the University of the Aegean.

On Tuesday December 17, 2013 the Committee met

- The Teaching Team on the undergraduate programme in Business Administration
 - the Dean and Programme Director Professor Giannias
 - Professor Agiomirgianankis Module Leader
 - Associate Professor and Portal Officer Economides,
 - Senior Lecturer Anastasia Pseiridis
 - Professor George Siomkos, Module Leader
 - Dr George Sfakianakis
 - Professor Emanuel Kavousanos, Module Leader
 - Dr Dimitrios Drosos, Module Leader
 - Dr Aikaterini Sarri Module Leader

- Professor Konstantinos Karfakis Module Leader
- Professor Pantelis Pantelidis
- Professor Angelos Antjoulatos
- Dr Ioannis Sorros, Associate Professor
- Dr Stella Karayianni, Module Leader
- Dr Vasiliki Dalakou, Assistant Module Leader
- Dr Maria Pempetzoglou, Portal Officer
- Dr Irimi Kyrillopoulou- Fafaliou Associate Professor , Module Leader
- Dr Barbara Milioni, Assistant Professor, Assistant Module Leader
- Dr George Malindretos
- Dr Nikolaos Konstantopoulos
- Dr Dimitrios Sidoras Module Leader
- Dr Ioannis Kehagias, Associate Professor, Module Leader
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- The Teaching Team of the Master Programme in Tourist Business Administration
 - Professor Paris Tsartas
 - Professor George Panigirakis
 - Associate Professor Andreas Papatheodorou
 - Dr Dimitrios Stergiou
 - Dr Polyxeni Moira
 - Dr George Tsamos
- The Teaching team of the Master Programme in Cultural Organisations Management
 - Associate Professor Philimon Bantimaroudis
 - Dr Maria Kontochristou
 - Associate Professor George Tsobanoglou
 - Associate Professor George Gantzias
- Representatives of the undergraduate Students

On Wednesday December 2013, the Committee met the following:

- The team of the MSc in Banking
 - Professor Dimitrios Vasiliou (DEP)
 - Associate Professor Nikolaos Eriotis
 - Professor K Syriopoulos
 - Professor Theodore Syriopoulos
 - Professor George Kouretas
 - Dr Dimitris Mpalios
 - Dr Spyridon Misiakoulis
- Representatives of the Graduate Students
- The President of the University Professor Haralambos Coccossis,

- The Team of the MSc in Health Care Management
 - Professor Dimitrios Niakas, Director HOU faculty member
 - Lecturer Petros Kostagiolas DMY50 Module Leader
 - Assistant Professor Panagiotis Bamidis DMY51 Module Leader
 - Associate Professor Fotios Anagnostopoulos DMY61 Module Leader
 - Dr. Nick Kontodimopoulos DMY60 Tutor and Portal Officer
 - Dr Maria Kalogeropoulou DMY50 Tutor
 - Dr Zoe Boutsoli DMY50 Tutor
 - Dr. Angelos Papadopoulos DMY51 Tutor
- The Full-time members of staff of the School of Social Sciences

From December 19th and through December 20th, the evaluation report was compiled, taking into account additional needed documents, as these were identified, requested, collected and evaluated.

List of Reports, documents, other data examined by the Committee.

The Committee examined the following documents:

- The School Internal Evaluation Report
- The University Studies Guide
- The detailed evaluation record of all Study Programmes for the 2008-12 period
- CVs of the teaching staff
- Electronic copies of all the Study Programmes presentation material
- Programmes Handbooks
- Dissertation Handbooks
- Samples of educational material, textbooks, instructors' course notes, assessed written assignments, assessed final examination papers, and Masters theses
- The School and the University website
- The approved annual budgets of the University for the Economic Years 2007-2012.

The School provided significant data and useful information concerning its activities, procedures and practices. The Committee found the Internal Evaluation Report informative for the purpose of writing the report. The atmosphere during the visit was cordial and collegial, while remaining at a professional level. Faculty were friendly and helped the committee's work by answering questions, engaging in dialogue and providing information and data, whenever possible. The Committee would like to thank the Dean and Vice-Dean, Professors Giannias and Vasiliou, and all Faculty members and tutors for their eagerness to provide it with input, share their thoughts and plans about the School and for their kind hospitality.

Groups of teaching and administrative staff and students interviewed

The Evaluation Committee met about 15 undergraduate students from all four years of the undergraduate programme. In addition, the committee met with approximately 15 graduate students, representing the 4 graduate programmes.

Facilities visited by the External Evaluation Committee

The Committee did not visit the facilities of the University in Patras. All the presentations and

meetings took place at the Athens Office of the University. However we were shown photos of the buildings in Patras and the plans for expansion of the facilities.

A1. Curriculum: Undergraduate Programme in Business

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?

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?
DEO34
- 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?

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?

IMPROVEMENT

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

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?**

What are the goals and objectives of the Curriculum? What is the plan for achieving them?

The Hellenic Open University was established in order to provide students, who for various reasons had not been able to enroll in a University as “traditional” students after they graduated from high school, with a “second chance” to pursue university level education. . The main objective of the undergraduate programme is to provide up to date management knowledge and skills to students who are, on the main, already in employment and whose primary objective is therefore to obtain an undergraduate degree that will further assist them in advancing their professional careers.

The curriculum reflects the fundamental goal of the programme and provides an extensive coverage of business administration and public administration courses that equip students with the appropriate knowledge and skills to work in private and public organizations.

The curriculum has therefore been designed as a distance education programme. Students are primarily responsible for their learning by studying independently textbooks provided by the University. In addition they have to attend five face to face classes of four hours each, every year. There is one or more prescribed textbooks for each subject the students study and these textbooks are distributed free of charge to students. However, due to problems arising from the very slow process of replacing rapidly antiquated textbooks, learning has been augmented by additional learning material made available by tutors that lead the classes. The tutors provide this additional, up-to-date teaching material on-line. The additional material supplements the textbooks that as it was stated earlier tend to be outdated. The University has a very effective system that ensures the selection of an extremely high quality calibre of professors. An annual review and reappointment of instructors safeguards the high quality of the programme. Students are able to provide feedback through an evaluation system that allows them to rate their professors. Furthermore, the quality of the programme is ensured by a series of four assignments that the students have to complete throughout the school year and a comprehensive end of the year written examination that students have to take in order to pass the module.

How were the objectives decided? Which factors were taken into account? Were they set against appropriate standards? Did the unit consult other stakeholders?

These objectives were contained in the original programme specifications and the Greek law that specified the goals of the University. The factors that were taken into account were the needs of large numbers of adults in the Greek society that did not have a University degree and the fact that traditional Universities were not providing enrolment opportunities to non-traditional working students. The objectives were therefore expressed in terms of content, structure and level of complexity, with the overall aim to produce a practical and relevant student experience to working adults desiring to obtain a University degree. Several factors were taken into account in deciding on the “right” method to select the students for the programme. Because the programme was designed to provide a second chance to students that

were not able to enrol to a University at a younger age, it was decided to select students by lot from a pool of qualified candidates. Potential students have to be over the age of 23 in order to be eligible to participate in the pool. Individuals younger than 23 could participate only when all potential applicants older than 23 were enrolled. This system although it does not allow the University to select the best students for its programmes, reflected the needs of the society for fairness. Generally, there is a widespread distrust in the Greek society of selection processes that allow the selectors to use subjective personal criteria. By utilizing a system that selected students by lot, the University ensured that it provided equal enrolment opportunities to all applicants.

However, the perception exists among the faculty that this selection process may have contributed to a high dropout rate which is approximately 35%. International evidence tends to support this view, and the dropout rate is in line with similar programmes in other countries which also target working adults and have the same or even higher non-completion rates.

The teaching objectives were developed based on the goals and priorities of other traditional and non-traditional Universities. In the early stages of the programme the School had discussions with professors of other Universities and representatives of various businesses. It does not appear that students were consulted to develop the teaching objectives at the time.

Is the curriculum consistent with the objectives of the Curriculum and the requirements of the society?

The undergraduate curriculum is delivered in a flexible time frame consistent with the profile of the student intake. Average student age tends to be high with most students in their 30s. The participants in the programme are people who are looking to advance in their current career path by obtaining formal educational qualifications; people who want to further enhance their knowledge in their selected field; and individuals looking for personal fulfilment.

The current curriculum is consistent with the stated objectives and provides the advanced scientific background needed within the field of study. In addition, the curriculum appears to reflect the needs of the society and provides skills to graduates that will allow them to successfully contribute to public and private organizations in the future.

Students are required to successfully complete 12 modules with each module worth 20 ECTS. The minimum time required to complete the required course of study is four years with students expected to take a maximum of 3 modules per year. However, it appears that many students due to family and professional obligations tend to take fewer than 3 modules and as a result it takes them substantially longer than four years to complete their degree. Currently the programme requires all students to take the same modules during the first two years. During the third year, students are able to select between Modules 33 or 45, the second Marketing module or DEO45 E-Business, New Technologies and Entrepreneurship. During the fourth year of studies, students have a choice between Modules 41, the Financial Capital Markets, or Module 44, the Entrepreneurial Theories and Innovation. In addition, in the same year, they can select between Module 42, (Total Quality Management and Environmental Management), and Module 43, (Industrial Organization, Job Market, and European Enterprises). This ability to select modules during the last two years provides students with the opportunity to specialize in a course of study that better reflects their personal and professional objectives. In the near

future, the school is planning to offer three new upper level concentrations, in management, marketing, and finance. These concentrations are expected to be approved by the Greek Ministry of Education in the next two years. Thus, students that have just enrolled during the 2013-2014 school year are expected to have the choice of selecting one of these concentrations during their third year of their studies.

Overall, the curriculum appears to provide the required content that students will need in order to be successful in their future employment in public and private enterprises. However the Committee feels that there are two issues that compromise the quality of the undergraduate curriculum and require attention. The first issue is the inflexibility of the module system. Because of the need to group courses together into Modules in order to simplify and compress the assessment process, students are not exposed to the various topics in a pedagogically useful way. For example, Module 34, Economic Policy and Analysis, which contains both basic and advanced topics in economics is taught in the third year. Yet, knowledge of fundamental economic concepts is required for Module 23, the first Marketing, which is a core course in the second year. The second issue is the overlapping that exists in the content of the various modules which means that the limited available study time of the non-traditional student is not optimized. Both issues are not unique to the specific programme under review, indeed these are issues that routinely face all universities, and can be easily resolved. However the Committee became aware of difficulties in resolving academic issues in general due to the legal framework of operation of the University but also due to a lack of coordination between the various leaders of the Modules. It is of paramount importance that the coordinators of the various modules communicate frequently in order to ensure that the knowledge provided in different modules is not replicated in modules offered either currently or in the future.

How was the curriculum decided? Were all constituents of the Department, including students and other stakeholders, consulted?

The curriculum was designed by the original Programme Director, module leaders and course instructors and the syllabus has been enhanced over the years by incorporating feedback provided by the students and faculty. The introduction of the new concentrations in management, marketing, and finance will provide the students with more flexibility and it will better serve the needs of the Greek society as a whole.

Students contribute to changes indirectly through comments on individual modules but there is no formal mechanism to involve them in updating the curriculum. In the future, the school may need to more formally include students in the curriculum change process. Furthermore, the involvement of representatives from the public and private sector may be very helpful, through the establishment of an Advisory Board. By having an advisory board, the School will be able to receive feedback from important stakeholders about the necessary knowledge and skills needed by organizations that will employ their graduates in the future.

Has the unit set a procedure for the revision of the curriculum?

There is a formal procedure for updating programme content through the Programme Committee that consists of the undergraduate Module Coordinators and the Program Director. Recommendations of the Committee go to the School Board (Kosmitia) and then forwarded to the Governing Body of the University for approval. There is also a revision committee at the level of the Module which is made up of the Module Coordinators and the course leaders.

The EEC concluded that all stakeholders, including students, have some input in the shaping of the curriculum. The introduction of new modules such as electronic commerce, entrepreneurship, new technologies, and advanced marketing, show a willingness by the school to provide an innovative curriculum which reflects the ever-changing needs of the Greek economy.

A suggestion from the EEC is that when new modules are created there is a need for more coordination among the module leaders. For example, DEO45 E-Business, New Technologies and Entrepreneurship, is an elective module that students can take instead of Marketing II. However, it was commented by staff of the School, that Electronic Commerce DEO45, E-Business, New Technologies and Entrepreneurship, needs concepts that are included in Marketing II. The solution is for some topics from Marketing II to go into Marketing I. The introduction of Marketing III will complicate things since that will be an additional elective that will be taken instead of Marketing II. The whole area of marketing needs to be rethought. For example, DEO45, E-Business, New Technologies and Entrepreneurship should become a compulsory module and not just an elective. Students will need the content from this module to compete in a changing global environment. Overall, the introduction of new modules may not be necessary, but instead it may create confusion and it will result in not covering important topics. The school needs to be very careful to cover necessary knowledge of a business function in required courses and to offer specialized knowledge that only a certain number of students may need in elective courses.

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?**

How effectively is the Department's goal implemented by the curriculum?

The programme endeavours to provide breadth and depth across the field of business and public administration and to integrate the theory and practice as per stated goal. In the vast majority of cases the instructors teaching the different courses are of very high quality and implement the curriculum effectively.

However, the Committee's review of the pertinent course syllabus and material indicates that there is some course module material overlap that needs to be addressed together with the issue of prerequisite knowledge mentioned earlier. .

How does the curriculum compare with appropriate, universally accepted standards for the specific area of study?

The programme is not a pure business administration programme since a significant part is devoted to public administration. As a result, there is a clear lack of philosophy in the programme curriculum with some of the content of the modules not common in the curricula of domestic and international Universities offering similar programmes. For example, Module

42 contains Total Quality Management and Environmental Management. While Total Quality Management is a necessary component of every business programme it does not seem to fit with environmental management. The latter of course, could be useful for those who have an interest in public administration and policy. Again the arbitrary grouping may deprive students from gaining specialized knowledge in specific fields, since those who are interested in Environmental Management may miss Total Quality Management. The school needs to ensure that the grouping of courses into modules reflects established principles of subject classification in other Universities in Greece and abroad and facilitates the learning experience of the students .

Is the structure of the curriculum rational and clearly articulated?

The curriculum is extremely broad and tries to cover too many topics. Instead of further expanding and adding more modules, the school may need to revisit the content of existing modules. Some modules that are taught in the third year may need to be moved to the second year to create a more consistent sequencing and to avoid content replication in the modules. The module coordinators may need to meet on a regular basis to discuss what is covered in the different modules and make frequent revisions.

Is the curriculum coherent and functional?

The programme is not a pure business administration programme since a significant part is devoted to public administration. This dual purpose is difficult to reconcile and makes the programme unbalanced in terms of the sequencing of modules.

Is the material for each course appropriate and the time offered sufficient?

The EEC believes that the grouping of courses into modules reduces the flexibility of certain courses to be offered at the right time. A case in point is *Module DEO34* which covers both basic economics and advanced topics in economic policy and public finance. The programme would benefit from a course in Economics in the first year as knowledge of fundamental economic concepts are required in many other courses.

We also believe that the module *Quantitative Analysis DEO 13*, covers a lot of material. The EEC fully understands that the module needs to cover the material taught in other Greek Universities so the degree would be equivalent. A possible solution as suggested by Professors involved in teaching the Module, would be to split the module into two different sub-modules (DEO13A and DEO13B). DEO13A will contain Mathematics for Business and Economics and Introduction to Statistics, and DEO13B will contain Operational Research and Introduction to Econometrics. Also *Operations Management, DEO 11* is taught in the first year where a more appropriate place would have been in later years when students have acquired more knowledge and the requisite quantitative skills.

Project Management is purely theoretical and it would benefit from a more practical approach. The EEC understands the difficulties faced by a distance education program to take a practical approach, but simulation games and the use of such widely available programs like Microsoft Excell would be very useful.

There is no course on small business management whereas Module *DEO 40* includes a course in the management of multinational companies. Considering the importance of small

businesses for the Greek economy, students may benefit from a course concentrating in small enterprises and the steps that small enterprises take to transform themselves into successful international operators. A possible solution may be to alter the present course from management of multinational companies to internationalization of smaller enterprises.

Does the Department have the necessary resources and appropriately qualified and trained staff to implement the curriculum?

The School has a very small number of full-time academics, but the external members are well integrated and have assumed both administrative and academic duties that facilitate this integration. Overall, it appears that the School has faculty of very high qualifications and the Committee was impressed by the high calibre of the external teaching staff. All the instructors, even those few instructors from the industry, have doctorate degrees. Most of them are professors at other Greek Universities, and most have published extensively in good quality journals in their fields. The general impression is that in comparison to similar institutions in other countries, the teaching team at the Hellenic Open University is of the same or higher quality.

Despite the very high quality of the full and part-time faculty of the University more resources are needed to ensure the quality of the undergraduate programme. In terms of resources for the administration of the programme, more administrative staff would help the delivery of the programme. The School also needs to increase the responsibility allowance of the coordinators of the various modules. These individuals are extremely dedicated and their hard work is necessary for the success of the whole program. However, their low compensation needs to be increased to better reflect the key role that they play. In terms of development of its staff, the Committee is of the view that full time faculty would benefit from funding to attend local and international conferences. Discretionary research funding is also necessary to ensure that full time faculty conduct original research and stay updated on developments in their field.

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?**

How well is the implementation achieving the Department's predefined goals and objectives?

This is a very popular programme and it has provided the opportunity to a large number of adults that did not have the opportunity to obtain a business degree at a younger age to come back to school and receive a university diploma. Thus, the University has completely achieved its goals of providing educational opportunities to working adults. Furthermore, the programme has been accepted by local businesses and governmental organizations and its graduates have been able to use their degrees to get better jobs, or enhance their careers. The committee had the unique pleasure of talking to several students who were able to pursue professional careers that would have been very difficult for them to follow had they not obtained the professional training provided by the School. For example, one of the recent graduates of the program works for the Embassy of Luxemburg in Athens in an important

position. Another student, while still an undergraduate, was able to obtain a new professional job because his employer was impressed by the quality of knowledge that he had acquired at the Hellenic Open University.

Overall, the School has met all its predefined goals and objectives and has made a great contribution to the Greek society by providing qualified candidates. There is a high demand to enroll in the program despite its reputation of being very difficult. This high demand suggests that the implementation of the curriculum has managed, in general, to achieve the stated goals and objectives. Review of the pertinent documentation indicates that the students value the curriculum. It should be noted that the average student evaluation for the tutors is quite high (4.1 out of 5), reflecting a high degree of satisfaction with the program.

If not, why is it so? How is this problem dealt with?

As it was stated earlier, it appears that the programme has achieved its main goals and objectives, and the problems identified can be remedied.

Does the Department understand why and how it achieved or failed to achieve these results?

The School knows the problems that exist but it is inhibited by the institutional arrangements that prohibit the change of even the content of a module. For example, a professor mentioned that administrators at the Ministry of Education determine whether the content of a module should change. In order to change a module or the textbooks used in a particular module a very lengthy process is required. The Committee strongly recommends that this process becomes a lot more flexible. Professors need to be able to change course materials on a regular basis and eventually textbooks need to be updated on an annual basis. In addition, programme revisions need to become easier to implement to reflect developments in the field and changes in the labour market.

IMPROVEMENT

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

Does the Department know how the Curriculum should be improved?

Faculty members presented several ideas of improving the Curriculum and the general learning experience of students. For example, online learning methods were discussed extensively, moving from printed textbooks to e-books, replacing some of the meetings with electronic lectures (webinars), and posting lectures on the web. The introduction of three new concentrations in management, marketing, and finance will be a major improvement providing students with new specializations. Overall, it appeared that the faculty teaching the undergraduate courses was excited to introduce new initiatives and courses.

Which improvements does the Department plan to introduce?

The School plans to introduce a number of changes. For example it is planned that Module DEO34 will be split into two modules one introductory and one more advanced, with the new introductory module to be offered in the second year. Similarly, the teaching team of DEO13 is planning to split the module in two different sub-modules (DEO13A and DEO13B). DEO13A will contain Mathematics for Business and Economics and Introduction to Statistics. DEO13B will cover Operational Research and Introduction to Econometrics.

The introduction of the three new concentrations in the next three years is a positive development. Moreover, the introduction of online textbooks will reduce the cost for the University and provide students with easy to update material.

A2. Curriculum: Postgraduate Programme in Banking

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?**

What are the goals and objectives of the Curriculum? What is the plan for achieving them?

The overall goal of the Masters Programme in Banking is to produce specialized graduates possessing the requisite knowledge and skills to succeed in today's globalized and highly competitive banking industry.

The specific objectives of the curriculum include: (a) the provision to students of technical financial skills in capital markets, portfolio and risk management, (b) the development of their strategic thinking and (c) the acquisition through case studies of analytical and decision making skills.

The programme also aspires to furnish the students with professional and management skills in order to foster a new generation of financial services and bank managers capable of dealing with corporate challenges, exploiting opportunities, and formulating and implementing innovative and effective business policies and strategies.

How were the objectives decided? Which factors were taken into account? Were they set against appropriate standards? Did the unit consult other stakeholders?

These objectives were contained in the original programme specification which was decided by the Ministry of Education at the time of the launch of the programme in 2000, but with the active participation and involvement in the design of the Hellenic Bank Association. The main factors that were taken into account were the rapidly expanding financial services in Greece and the need for this expanding work force to acquire up to date managerial and technical skills in a way that would not disrupt their working patterns.

In order to make sure that these objectives would be achieved, the programme restricts the pool of potential applicants, from which students are selected by lot, to graduates of economics and business with graduates from other disciplines being admitted only if they have worked for at least 4 years in the banking industry.

The programme in effect is designed for practicing financial and banking managers aspiring to acquire all appropriate management skills and competencies to better position themselves for future advancement and success. The participants in the programme are people who are looking to advance in their current career path.

The programme does not allow graduates of other disciplines who work outside the banking sector to apply, and therefore have no work experience in Banking to be selected, depriving potentially the banking industry of a number of graduates from Sciences and mathematics or computing to follow career in Banking, in contrast to the international practice.

The Committee also considered whether selection by lot, which ignores academic competence, might compromise the academic rigour of the Programme or result in higher failure or withdrawal rates. Examining the syllabi, the examination questions and the Coursework, the Committee found no evidence of this. On the contrary, the Programme has the lowest drop-out rate and one of the highest first-time pass rates among the HOU programmes. It seems that the homogeneous group of students, all with relevant industry backgrounds ensures the success of the teaching experience.

Is the curriculum consistent with the objectives of the Curriculum and the requirements of the society?

In terms of its content, the curriculum of the programme consists of four modules and a dissertation accounting for 120 ECTS in total as follows:

1. Module TPA50: The Banking Environment (Τραπεζικό Περιβάλλον)
2. Module TPA51: Management of Banks (Τραπεζική Διοίκηση)
3. Module TPA60: Accounting and Information Systems for Banks (Μέσα Τραπεζικής Εργασίας)
4. Module TPA6: Banking Strategy (Στρατηγική Τραπεζών)
5. Dissertation

The programme contains the elements required for the students to be exposed to all aspects of the banking industry, while the continuous revision of programme content ensures that changes in the market place are incorporated in the programme.

In terms of delivery, the curriculum of the programme as it is delivered at present is certainly consistent with the objectives of the Curriculum in that it is delivered flexibly over a period of 36-60 months accommodating those at work and it is delivered by academics who are leaders in their specific areas of expertise.

Finally in terms of assessment, the assessment methods, through the coursework and the written examination, examine thoroughly the attainment of the learning objectives and the extended Dissertation develops enduring research skills.

The current curriculum is therefore consistent with the stated objectives and provides the advanced scientific background needed within the field of study. In addition, the programme allows students to bring their own professional expertise into the curriculum by selecting a Dissertation topic of interest to them and consequently promote knowledge sharing.

How was the curriculum decided? Were all constituents of the Department, including students and other stakeholders, consulted?

The curriculum was designed by the original Programme Committee and a panel of experts and the content of the individual modules, but not the structure has been updated at regular intervals by course instructors in a way consistent with the objectives of the programme. Students are not directly involved in the updating of module content but indirectly through

their comments, affect the pedagogical approach adopted.

Has the unit set a procedure for the revision of the curriculum?

There is a formal procedure for updating program content through the Programme Committee that consists of the four Module Leaders and the Director of the Program. Recommendations of the Committee go to the School Board and then forwarded to the Governing Board of the University for approval. There is also a revision committee at the level of the Module which is made up of the module leader and the course instructors.

The Committee concluded that all stakeholders, including students, contribute in a meaningful way to the updating of the curriculum. The MSc in Banking is one of the most popular programmes of the Hellenic Open University, with a unique focus, covered by only a small number of graduate programmes in other Greek Universities.

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?**

How effectively is the Department's goal implemented by the curriculum?

The programme endeavours to provide breadth and depth across the field of study and to integrate the theory and practice. The delivery of the programme and the relevance to the needs of the industry is borne out by the successful completion rates, the quality of the Dissertation and the rigour of the assessment.

However the Committee is concerned that the inflexible way of grouping seemingly unrelated subjects into modules with a single examination inhibits the successful implementation of the curriculum. For example, in TPA51 the student is assessed in a single examination in Human Resources management and in financial theory, two subjects that require different skills and certainly a different pedagogical approach and delivery.

How does the curriculum compare with appropriate, universally accepted standards for the specific area of study?

The curriculum covers all the elements of a postgraduate banking degree and is consistent in terms of coverage with degrees offered by other Universities.

Is the structure of the curriculum rational and clearly articulated?

The structure of the degree in terms of sequencing is rational with the fundamental aspects covered early on (TPA50) and the more advanced aspects (TPA61) covered at the end of the course. The structure of the programme is clearly articulated in the Course Handbook.

Is the curriculum coherent and functional?

The curriculum is coherent and functional but as the modules TPA50 which covers Monetary Theory and Policy, the Financial System and Banking Law, TPA51 which covers Financial Management, Human Resources Management and Strategies of Growth for Banks and TPA61 which covers the Management of Banking Risks, Portfolio Management, and Special Types of Credit share a number of common elements, care should be taken to avoid potential overlap. At the same time since later modules build on the knowledge acquired in earlier modules, coverage of the requisite material should be ensured.

Is the material for each course appropriate and the time offered sufficient?

The material for each course is at the appropriate level of difficulty and relevance and the time allocated is sufficient for students to study, although students expressed the view that on certain occasions the time was too short for the amount of coursework that they had to do.

Does the Department have the necessary resources and appropriately qualified and trained staff to implement the curriculum?

The successful delivery of the programme is based on adequate central IT resources and support at the level of the Module. Each Module has a portal officer, who helps staff and students to become familiar with the course management platform.

The programme is also well resourced in terms of reading material, access to electronic sources and libraries. Access to Libraries is ensured through the arrangement that the Hellenic Open University has reached with a number of University libraries.

The Director of the Programme Professor Vasiliou is an expert in the field of Banking and the other Module Leaders (Professor Kouretas, Professor Eriotis and Professor Syriopoulos) are professors at other Greek Universities with significant experience of teaching at the Hellenic Open University. The external teaching staff is well qualified and the method of selecting external members of staff appears to be robust.

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?**

How well is the implementation achieving the Department's predefined goals and objectives?

The programme under review is successfully implementing the Schools goals and objectives, since it has managed since 2000-2002, to attract 2,853 students, to produce 1,202 graduates and to manage a current student population of 1,246 making it the largest programme in the School and one of the most popular programmes of the Hellenic Open University as evidenced by the number of applicants to the programme. The low drop-out rate and the high score (an average of 4.14 out of 5) that students award to the instructors are testaments of the quality of

the programme.

If not, why is it so? How is this problem dealt with?

There is a lack of flexibility in updating teaching material and content of the programme since adding or subtracting modules from the programme is ultimately decided by the Ministry of Education, a process that takes a long time to be completed, and once it is completed, then it takes a long time to be implemented.

Does the Department understand why and how it achieved or failed to achieve these results?

The School of Social Sciences is fully aware of the problems it faces in terms of implementing changes to teaching material and tries to circumvent these difficulties by providing supplemental material on which the students cannot be assessed though.

IMPROVEMENT

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

Does the Department know how the Curriculum should be improved?

The Programme Director and the Module Leaders understand the necessity of greater flexibility in the design of the programme and the need to enrich the quality of graduate academic experience by developing opportunities for students to pursue their professional and research interests. There is a need for the programme to establish a permanent and formal relationship with the Greek banking industry, the Bank of Greece and the Hellenic Bank Association to promote knowledge sharing. Furthermore, the programme should encourage students to (a) work with financial institutions, industries and companies, (b) participate in Working Groups and Task Forces, (c) engage with others so that to bring their expertise and perspective to Greek economic policy.

Which improvements does the Department plan to introduce?

The School plans to initiate collaboration with other Greek Universities (e.g. the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens) and international partners (e.g. France Business School).

A4. Curriculum: Postgraduate Programme in Tourist Business Administration

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?

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?

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?

IMPROVEMENT

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

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?**

What are the goals and objectives of the Curriculum? What is the plan for achieving them?

The tourism industry remains one of the most dynamic industries in Greece providing employment in excess of 1 million people and contributing significantly to economic development. However, only 1 in 5 of those employed in the tourism industry possess the requisite formal qualifications. The main objective of the programme, which started in 1998, is therefore to provide those employed in the tourism or related industries, central government and local authorities with relevant knowledge and skills to help the industry retain its competitive advantages and at the same time ensure that best practices are adopted and innovative products and services are launched.

How were the objectives decided? Which factors were taken into account? Were they set against appropriate standards? Did the unit consult other stakeholders?

These objectives were contained in the original programme specification which was decided by the Ministry of Education at the time of the launch of the programme but with the active participation and involvement of the industry and industry experts. The factors that were taken into account were (a) the size and importance of the Tourism sector in Greece and the need for this untrained work force to acquire up to date managerial and professional skills, (b) the need for continuous innovation in the industry and the launch of new products and (c) the need for flexible delivery so that those who work in the industry to be able to study without disrupting their professional life.

Is the curriculum consistent with the objectives of the Curriculum and the requirements of the society?

The curriculum is certainly consistent with the objectives of the Curriculum and the requirements of the society because it is of the right breadth and depth and degree of flexibility. In terms of depth and breadth the programme consists of four modules and a dissertation accounting for 120 ECTS in total.

In terms of relevance to the industry, the four modules of the programme cover all the essential aspects of the industry, namely

- *DTE50 General principles of management* covers general principles of management and introduction to the tourist industry as well as the legal framework within which the industry operates
- *DTE51 Tourism Sector* covers the Economics of tourism and organisation of travel, Tourism environment and development, tourism policy and sociology of tourism, tourism informatics
- *DTE60 Tourism Management* covers Hotel Management, Tour operators, alternative types of tourism, management of tourist organisation, and event management.

- *DTE61 Tourism Marketing* covers Basic principles of marketing, tourism management, marketing mix of tourism

The above modules together with the Dissertation ensure that students are exposed to all aspects of the tourism industry while the continuous revision of programme content ensures that changes in the industry as well as academic developments are incorporated in the programme.

In terms of delivery, the curriculum of the programme as it is delivered at present is certainly consistent with the objectives of the Curriculum in that it is delivered flexibly over a period of 36-60 months accommodating those at work and it is delivered by academics who are leaders in their specific areas of expertise.

Finally in terms of assessment, the assessment methods, through the coursework and the written examination, examine thoroughly the attainment of the learning objectives and the extended Dissertation develops enduring research skills.

The current curriculum is therefore consistent with the stated objectives and provides the advanced scientific background needed within the field of study. In addition, the programme allows students to bring their own professional expertise into the curriculum by selecting a thesis topic of interest to them and consequently helping their own organisations solve particular problems.

How was the curriculum decided? Were all constituents of the Department, including students and other stakeholders, consulted?

The curriculum was designed by the original Programme Director, module leaders and course instructors and the coursework has been enhanced over the years by incorporating feedback provided by the students, tutors and the industry. Currently there is no formal way for the industry to express views on the content of the curriculum, although the close links of both students and staff with the industry ensure that there is input into course content.

Has the unit set a procedure for the revision of the curriculum?

There is a formal procedure for updating program content through the Programme Committee that consists of the four Course Leaders and the Director of the Program. Recommendations of the Committee go to the School Board and then forwarded to the Governing Body of the University for approval. There is also a revision committee at the level of the Module which is made up of the module leader and the course coordinators.

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?**

How effectively is the Department's goal implemented by the curriculum?

The goal of the School to provide flexible, but rigorous and relevant education is effectively implemented through the curriculum of the programme since the programme has managed to attract a wide range of students who finish within 5 years with good performance, low dropout rates and consistently high evaluation scores for the staff by the student body.

Although all the instructors are external members of staff, the effective delivery of the programme does not seem to be compromised and it was evident that the high quality of the external staff ensures the effective implementation of the School and programme objectives. This is helped by the fact that the teaching team has been together for many years and therefore there is a clear understanding of the needs of the programme and a common pedagogical philosophy.

How does the curriculum compare with appropriate, universally accepted standards for the specific area of study?

The programme is comparable to other postgraduate programmes in the management of tourist enterprises in terms of its content and quality of staff and has managed to incorporate aspects specific to the Greek tourism industry. In view of the increasing importance of alternative forms of tourism, the Director of the programme has confirmed that the curriculum will emphasize these areas more in the future.

Is the structure of the curriculum rational and clearly articulated?

The structure of the programme is rational and clearly articulated. The students study fundamental aspects of management and administration relevant to the tourism industry together with a good review of the structure and performance of the industry before they move into the economic, strategic and marketing aspects of the industry.

Is the curriculum coherent and functional?

The curriculum is coherent and functional with the correct sequencing in terms of prerequisite knowledge.

Is the material for each course appropriate and the time offered sufficient?

The material for each course is at the appropriate level of difficulty and relevance and the time allocated is sufficient for students to study.

Does the Department have the necessary resources and appropriately qualified and trained staff to implement the curriculum?

The successful delivery of the programme is based on adequate central IT resources and support at the level of the Module. Each Module has a portal officer, who helps staff and students to become familiar with the course management platform.

The programme is also well resourced in terms of reading material, access to electronic sources and libraries. Access to Libraries is ensured through the arrangement that the

University has reached with a number of University libraries.

Although all the members of staff are external, they are well qualified and the selection method robust. The Director of the Programme Professor Tsartas is a leading expert in the field of Tourism and the other Module Leaders (Professor Papatheodorou, Professor Maroudas and Professor Panigirakis) are professors at other Greek Universities with significant experience of teaching at the Hellenic Open University. All the teaching staff are well integrated and have both administrative and academic duties that facilitate the coordination and delivery of the programme.

The School has instituted a number of committees dealing with both operational and quality assurance aspects of the programmes, including the portal, assessment, plagiarism, student complaints and examination centres which ensure that standards are maintained and remedial action is taken when problems are identified.

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?**

How well is the implementation achieving the Department's predefined goals and objectives?

The goal of providing a flexible but rigorous and relevant degree to students who pursue careers in tourism or related industries is fully attained by the programme. The experience, calibre and dedication of staff ensure the smooth delivery of the programme, and the coursework and assessment methods make possible the attainment of the learning outcomes. The overwhelming evidence from the student evaluations and the interviews the committee held with students is that the students on the programme are happy. The low dropout rates and the high completion rates testify to the success of the programme.

If not, why is it so? How is this problem dealt with?

One area where the Programme Team feels that there is a need for improvement is in the writing of the Dissertation where students with no research or independent study skills are required to work on a demanding dissertation accounting for 20 percent of their degree.

The problem is resolved by the members of staff having additional meetings with the students and providing extra assistance but some kind of basic research methodology course should be incorporated in the programme.

Does the Department understand why and how it achieved or failed to achieve these results?

The Programme Team is fully aware of the reasons that inhibit the attainment of the goals as explained in the paragraphs above and with the degrees of freedom that it currently possess is trying to overcome them.

IMPROVEMENT

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

Does the Department know how the Curriculum should be improved?

Although the curriculum is consistent with the objectives of the programme, and the content of individual modules is regularly updated, the structure of the programme itself is difficult to change. Thus although the staff of the programme is fully aware of the changes that need to be implemented such as greater emphasis on the alternative forms of tourism, the cumbersome and time consuming procedure of obtaining approval for a change in the structure of the programme means that the programme is less relevant for its graduates.

Which improvements does the Department plan to introduce?

The Programme Team intends to update the programme to include alternative types of tourism, to emphasize the needs for greater competence in foreign languages and to provide students with research methodology training for their dissertation.

A5. Curriculum: Postgraduate Programme in Cultural Organizations Management

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?

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?

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?

IMPROVEMENT

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

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?**

What are the goals and objectives of the Curriculum? What is the plan for achieving them?

The cultural industry is central to the Greek economy and the main objective of the programme, which started in 2004, is to attract students who are already employed in the cultural industries and provide them, in a flexible way, with specialized and rigorous knowledge relevant to the cultural industry and to equip them with skills to understand the economic aspects, products, marketing and managerial needs of the cultural industry.

How were the objectives decided? Which factors were taken into account? Were they set against appropriate standards? Did the unit consult other stakeholders?

These objectives were specified in the original programme specification after wide and long consultation over a number of years with stakeholders such as the Ministry of Culture and other government agencies, museums and other cultural organisations.

Is the curriculum consistent with the objectives of the Curriculum and the requirements of the society?

The modules of the programme *DPM50 Aspects of Cultural Phenomena*, *DPM51 Cultural Management and Policy*, *DPM60 Cultural Economics*, *DPM61 Cultural Communication* and the *Dissertation* cover all aspects pertinent to the management of cultural organizations whereas the requisite depth is achieved by requiring that the programme consists of 120 ECTS. The relevance of the programme is ensured with the continuous revision of programme content to incorporate both academic developments and developments in the industry.

In terms of delivery, the curriculum of the programme, as it is delivered at present, is certainly consistent with the objectives of the Curriculum in that it is delivered flexibly over a period of 36-60 months accommodating those in work and it is delivered by academics who are leaders in their specific areas of expertise;

Finally, in terms of assessment, the assessment methods, through the coursework and the written examination, examine thoroughly the attainment of the learning objectives and the extended Dissertation develops enduring research skills.

The current curriculum is therefore consistent with the stated objectives and provides the advanced scientific background needed within the field of study. In addition, the programme allows students to bring their own professional expertise into the curriculum by selecting a thesis topic of interest to them and their organizations.

How was the curriculum decided? Were all constituents of the Department, including students and other stakeholders, consulted?

The curriculum was designed to meet the objectives of the programme and it is the result of the input of many stakeholders including the current teaching staff. The content of the individual modules has been enhanced over the years by incorporating feedback provided by the students and tutors as well as academic developments and developments in the industry.

Has the unit set a procedure for the revision of the curriculum?

There is a formal procedure for updating program content through the Program Committee that consists of the four Course Leaders and the Director of the Program. Recommendations of the Committee go to the School Board and then forwarded to the Governing Body of the

University for approval. There is also a revision committee at the level of the Module which is made up of the module leader and the course coordinators. Given the unique role of the programme in providing training to those who work in the cultural industry, a formal and permanent relationship with the industry should be established in order to ensure that the needs of the industry inform curriculum content.

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?**

How effectively is the Department's goal implemented by the curriculum?

The goal of the School to provide flexible but rigorous and relevant education is effectively implemented through the curriculum of the programme since the programme has managed to attract a wide range of students who finish within 5 years with good performance, low dropout rates and consistently high evaluation scores for the staff by the student body.

The department has one full time faculty member, Dr. Maria Kontochristou, Lecturer at the School of Social Sciences and module coordinator of the DPM50 course, and a large number of external instructors. Although all but one of the instructors are external members of staff, the effective delivery of the programme does not seem to be compromised and it was evident that the high quality of the external staff ensures the effective implementation of the School and programme objectives. This is helped by the fact that the teaching team has been together for many years and therefore there is a clear understanding of the needs of the programme and a common pedagogical philosophy.

How does the curriculum compare with appropriate, universally accepted standards for the specific area of study?

The programme is comparable to other postgraduate programmes in the management of cultural enterprises in terms of its content and quality of staff and has managed to incorporate aspects specific to the Greek cultural industry. In view of the increasing importance of digitisation, the Director of the programme has confirmed that the curriculum will emphasize these areas more in the future.

Is the structure of the curriculum rational and clearly articulated?

The structure of the programme is rational and clearly articulated. The students study fundamental aspects of management and administration relevant to the cultural industry together with a good review of the structure and performance of the industry before they move into the economic, strategic and marketing aspects of the industry.

Is the curriculum coherent and functional?

The curriculum is coherent and functional with the correct sequencing in terms of prerequisite knowledge.

Is the material for each course appropriate and the time offered sufficient?

The material for each course is at the appropriate level of difficulty and relevance and the time allocated is sufficient for students to study.

Does the Department have the necessary resources and appropriately qualified and trained staff to implement the curriculum?

The successful delivery of the programme is based on adequate central IT resources and support at the level of the Module. Each Module has a portal officer, who helps staff and students to become familiar with the course management platform.

The programme is also well resourced in terms of reading material, access to electronic sources and libraries. Access to Libraries is ensured through the arrangement that the University has reached with a number of University libraries.

Although all the members of staff with the exception of Dr. Maria Kontochristou, are external, they are well qualified and the selection method robust. The Director of the Programme Professor Bantimaroudis is the leading expert in the field of Cultural Industries and the other Module Leaders (Professor G. Gantzias, Dr M. Kontochristou and Professor G Tsobanoglou) are specialists in their fields and have significant experience of teaching at the Hellenic Open University. All the teaching staff are well integrated and have both administrative and academic duties that facilitate the coordination and delivery of the programme.

The School has instituted a number of committees dealing with both operational and quality assurance aspects of the programmes, including the portal, assessment, plagiarism , student complaints and examination centres which ensure that standards are maintained and remedial action is taken when problems are identified.

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?**

How well is the implementation achieving the Department's predefined goals and objectives?

The goal of providing a flexible but rigorous and relevant degree to students who pursue careers in culture-related industries is fully attained by the programme. The experience, calibre and dedication of staff ensure the smooth delivery of the programme, and the coursework and assessment methods make possible the attainment of the learning outcomes. The overwhelming evidence from the student evaluations and the interviews the committee held with students is that the students on the programme are happy. The low dropout rates and the high completion rates testify to the success of the programme.

If not, why is it so? How is this problem dealt with?

One area where the Programme Team feels that there is a need for improvement is in the writing of the Dissertation where students with no research or independent study skills are required to work on a demanding dissertation accounting for 20 percent of their degree.

The problem is resolved by the members of staff having additional meeting with the students and providing extra assistance but some kind of basic research methodology course should be incorporated in the programme.

Does the Department understand why and how it achieved or failed to achieve these results?

The Programme Team is fully aware of the reasons that inhibit the attainment of the goals as explained in the paragraphs above and with the degrees of freedom that it currently possess is trying to overcome them.

IMPROVEMENT

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

Does the Department know how the Curriculum should be improved?

During the last 10 years the programme has run successfully, however the Course Director and the Module Leaders are fully aware of the need to update the curriculum by incorporating new developments, taking advantage of the technology and establishing a permanent relationship with the industry so that feedback can be provided on a permanent basis.

Which improvements does the Department plan to introduce?

The program team plans to embark on an updating of the structure of the programme, the content of its modules, the development of strategic cooperation with cultural institutions and the establishment of joint programmes with other universities.

A3 Curriculum: Postgraduate Programme in Health Care Management

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?

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?

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?

IMPROVEMENT

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

The program was launched in 2000.

The number of students increased significantly and has reached 1078. Also 34 SEP members have been assigned to teach in one of the four modules.

DMY50 Fundamental Principles of Management in Health Care

DMY51 Health Services /Hospital: Peculiarities and Challenges of the Greek Health system

DMY60 Health Economics and Financial Management

DMY61 Sociological and Psychological approaches to Hospitals and Health Services

What are the goals and objectives of the Curriculum? What is the plan for achieving them?

The main goals are:

- The preparation of managers with knowledge and competences to run effectively health care units and fill administrative posts in the healthcare system.
- The education and formation of effective managers able to make rational decisions, which are also socio-politically acceptable in the health care environment.
- The education of health professionals in critical issues concerning their professional competences regarding management, understanding of the economic environment, and behaviour in their professional work.

How were the objectives decided? Which factors were taken into account? Were they set against appropriate standards? Did the unit consult other stakeholders?

These objectives were specified in the original program specification and have been influenced by the lack of professionally competent managers in the health care system. A significant percentage of those employed in key positions in the health care sector still lack formal qualifications.

The factors taken into account include:

- (a) The quality of the student intake, which is not controlled by the institution,
- (b) the fact that most of the students are already in employment in the health care sector.

The objectives were therefore expressed in terms of content, structure, and level of complexity, with the overall aim to produce a practical and relevant to student experience program.

The student view was that the programme has achieved its objectives to a high degree. Students are generally very satisfied by both its content and delivery mode. The unit had consulted stakeholders, mainly health care professionals at high level positions for the program development. It should be added that both the head of the program and the module coordinators have used their connections in the health care sector for this purpose.

Has the unit set a procedure for the revision of the curriculum?

There is a formal procedure for updating program content through the Program Committee that consists of the four Module Leaders and the Director of the Program. Recommendations of the Committee go to the School Board and then forwarded to the Governing Body of the University for final approval.

There is also a revision committee at the level of the Module, which is made up of the module leader and the course coordinators.

The Committee concluded that all stakeholders, including students, were consulted prior to the establishment of the current curriculum. The MSc in Health Care Management is one of the most popular programmes of the Hellenic Open University, with a unique focus, covered by only a few graduate programmes in other Greek Universities.

There is a revision process under way with a proposal for substantial changes. The proposal includes the revision of the title of Module 60 from “Economic and Financial Management of Health Services” to “Health Economics” in order to better reflect the content of the unit. DMY 51 will also be revised and retitled as “Health Services, Policy, and Information Systems”.

IMPLEMENTATION

How effectively is the Department’s goal implemented by the curriculum?

The program endeavors to provide breadth and depth across the field of study and to integrate the theory and practice as per stated goal. Overall the program is well structured, extremely popular and of high quality. The curriculum is well balanced, coherent and functional and is comparable to programmes offered internationally. The Committee’s review of the pertinent course syllabus and material indicates that there is minimum course module material overlap and that the quality of the per course module instruction is uniform across the various sections.

How does the curriculum compare with appropriate, universally accepted standards for the specific area of study?

The curriculum compares well with the appropriate and universally accepted standards for the specific area of the study. It contains basic approaches and principles, but also a detailed description of the peculiarities of the Greek health care system. A good practice is the inclusion of a section in the module on research methods in the thematic unit DMY 61 to prepare students for their thesis.

It also includes management principles, economic analysis and knowledge of the specific environment of the health care and the importance of quality management in this area. Finally the program incorporates the important sociological and psychological approaches to the health care putting the appropriate emphasis on the human factor.

Is the structure of the curriculum rational and clearly articulated?

The structure of the curriculum follows a logical sequence from the fundamentals of management and the description of the Greek health care system to more advanced topics of health economics and management. It is clearly stated and presented in the course Modules.

Is the curriculum coherent and functional?

The program is coherent and functional according to feedback from both the teaching staff and the students.

Is the material for each course appropriate and the time offered sufficient?

The members of the committee judge that the material for each course is appropriate and the time offered sufficient. It should be noted however that the average time for students to finish the program is four to five years indicating that it is a demanding program.

In addition since the students of this program are mostly professionals in the health care system they know the appropriate competences and skills needed in the workplace and their positive assessment of the program indicates that its material is appropriate. A noteworthy feature of the Module DMY 51 is the categorization of learning outcomes according to the Bloom taxonomy, which guides teaching personnel in linking the various aspects of teaching the Module with the learning outcomes.

Does the Department have the necessary resources and appropriately qualified and trained staff to implement the curriculum?

While there is only one member of the permanent Faculty for this program there is an adequate number of teaching personnel for the program. The evaluation committee has identified the need for an increase of the permanent Faculty members in this program in view of the fact that it has considerable demand among prospective students.

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?

The program meets the Department goals and objectives. It also understands the need to enrich the quality of graduate academic experience by developing opportunities for students to pursue their professional and research interests. The element of research is particularly notable in this program through the theses undertaken by the final year students.

There is a need for the program to further connect with the Greek health care system, in order to promote knowledge sharing. Furthermore, the program should encourage students to (a) participate in Working Groups and Task Forces, (b) engage with others so that to bring their expertise and perspective to the Greek health care system.

IMPROVEMENT

Does the Department know how the Curriculum should be improved?

The Department seems to be well aware of the need to introduce curriculum changes and improvements taking into account the fact that the basic textbooks of the program were introduced in 1999 or 2000.

Which improvements does the Department plan to introduce?

The process for introduction of improvements is institutionalized with proposals for program improvement at the meetings of the module teaching personnel and the subsequent discussion

at the Program Committee. The proposals are then submitted to the School Board and then to the University Governing Board for final approval. This process was followed for example for the Module DMY 61 for the introduction from this year of a new book “Introduction to Health Psychology” written by two American professors and translated into Greek. There is also the possibility to introduce corrections and additions to the existing teaching material in the electronic study platform. There is a new proposal under development for the revision and improvement of the Module DMY 60 with specific themes under 14 points. The new approach will emphasize the use of academic articles and other material instead of reliance on a single textbook.

There are also thoughts of further use of technology in order to develop SOOCs (Small Open Online Courses).

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**

Teaching methods used

The School of Social Sciences uses a variety of distance learning methods to deliver its undergraduate and postgraduate programmes the core element of which is the concept of self-paced learning. Students are provided with the necessary learning material (textbooks, course notes, audio and video supplements, software, etc.). The syllabus is approximately 800 pages per undergraduate module and 1,200 pages per postgraduate module. Students must plan their own time to study course material, work on course activities, and hand in assignments by the due date. Course material is accompanied by a study guide that assists them on how to devise a study plan for each course module.

Teaching Staff/Student ratio

The full-time faculty of the School consists of 13 (one of which is on non-paid leave of absence) full-time members of staff and approximately 367 external visiting staff. According to international standards this is acceptable, however the committee suggests that more full time faculty members are recruited especially on the postgraduate programmes.

Teacher/Student Collaboration

Students are continuously supported by the assigned faculty staff. Specifically, students are divided into groups (not exceeding 35 students in each group) headed by an instructor, who represents their main contact/advisor for a particular module throughout the academic year. The staff/student ratio of 1:35 is such that good individual relationships can be developed. Independent Study is supplemented by face to face tuition sessions which take place five times for each module during the 10 month academic year. These sessions are held in eight regional centers throughout Greece. Each session consists of a four-hour tutorial in which students have the opportunity to ask questions and instructors to explain aspects of the course and the assignments. Contact sessions and assignments are the corner-stone of the Hellenic Open University teaching method and the main tutor-student contact. Further contact between tutors and students is accomplished through e-mail, phone calls at specified times of the week and video-conferencing such as Skype. One of the comments that students made with regard to the face to face meetings was that, on certain occasions, the time was not used effectively by instructors and the approach adopted at these meetings differed significantly amongst

undergraduate instructors.

Adequacy of means and resources

The Committee formed the view that there are adequate central resources to support the teaching of the graduate and undergraduate modules, although the recent increase in the number of students without warning has stretched those resources, especially teaching staff. One of the concerns of the Committee is the lack of administrative support at School level, which would have helped with the coordination of the delivery. The Committee is satisfied that the processes of ensuring the quality of teaching resources are robust. The tutors go through an annual review and reselection process, which means that tutors may be changed if their performance is not up to required standard. Furthermore, the comprehensive data collection and analysis capability provides extensive measures of quality, notably focusing on student and coordinator evaluation, and feedback performance.

Use of information technologies

The technology used is sufficient. The Committee was presented evidence of the use of Moodle and examples of use of online learning technology. The Educational Content, Methodology and Technology Laboratory (e-CoMeT Lab), which operates as an independent unit of the University, supports Hellenic Open University in applying educational, methodological and technological innovation in distance learning and educational content development.

Examination system

Each module is assessed by four written assignments and a final examination. A student's final grade is a weighted sum of these two components with the assignments accounting for thirty percent and the final examination for seventy percent of the module mark. Students are allowed to sit the final examination only after they have submitted at least three assignments and have achieved a cumulative mark of 20 in the three assignments. To pass a module, a student needs to secure a passing mark in both the final examination and the assignments. The Committee noticed that once students achieved a cumulative mark of twenty from the three assignments and therefore the right to proceed to the final examination, very few students submitted the fourth assignment. To the extent that the fourth assignment is designed to assess essential learning outcomes, there is a potential problem in meeting the learning objectives of the programmes and the Committee would like to recommend that a solution be found.

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**

Quality of teaching procedures

The teaching element in the programmes under review is limited in the face to face sessions that supplement independent study. Although the students seem content with the way these meetings are conducted, it seems that the quality of delivery is variable, and a more uniform and structured approach to teaching would enhance the educational experience of the students, especially the undergraduate students that need to develop their study skills early on in the programme. That requires further investment in the training of teaching staff and more effective use of technology.

Quality and adequacy of teaching materials and resources

The learning material used at the Hellenic Open University is mainly in printed form, each module is assigned one or more approved textbooks, specially adapted to meet the needs and standards of distance education with additional, electronic and audiovisual material being provided in some modules. The approved textbooks are distributed to the students of each programme and comprise the material on which students will be assessed. The Committee became aware that many textbooks used are outdated and need to be updated as soon as possible. The Committee is of the view that the current system, based mainly on printed form, is obsolete and the University should replace the standard textbook with annually update downloadable electronic material. .

Quality of course material. Is it brought up to date?

In most cases the quality and adequacy of teaching materials and resources is satisfactory. As far as the updating of material is concerned, there is a formal mechanism through the Course Updating Committee for recommending updates. However, a recurring point made by all programme directors, module coordinators and teaching staff was the difficulty of implementing updates to teaching material with the result many of the books to be out-of date. In some cases, such as law, accounting or public administration where the material is driven to a large extent by regulatory or policy changes, the inability to speedily update the main textbook seriously compromises the quality of the course offered. In order to alleviate the problem, teaching staff provides “supplementary” material on which, however, students cannot be examined. This is a serious problem and was one of the main complaints raised from both undergraduate and postgraduate students.

Linking of research with teaching

At the postgraduate level the link between research and teaching is good. Many of the instructors are outstanding researchers who manage to link their own research with the subjects they teach. In other cases, such as the postgraduate programmes in the management of health units and banking, research findings inform to a large extent the syllabus. The School is committed to enhancing the link between research and teaching, with further efforts to incorporate the latest research into the course content and syllabi.

Many of the faculty (including part time faculty) have significant practical experience as well as research experience which informs teaching through case studies and research papers.

Mobility of academic staff and students

Due to the nature of the programme, students are not expected to be mobile and there was little

evidence that staff also visit other institutions or there are exchange agreements with similar institutions or conventional universities. The Committee is of the view that such staff exchanges would benefit the School and will help adopt and implement best practices from elsewhere. .

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

Student evaluations of teaching and the course content and study material/resources are regularly carried out and the results are notified to stakeholders with a view of improving teaching. The School considers these evaluations an important component of the quality assurance process and acts on their findings, with external instructor contract renewal determined to a large extent by the outcomes of those evaluations. The results of the evaluation were presented to the Committee and there is seems to be broad satisfaction among the students with regard to the teaching and the teaching material.

The Evaluation Committee also met separately with undergraduate and postgraduate students in order to have direct evidence of the views of the student body. The experience of the two groups of students seems to be significantly different. The undergraduate students, represented by students from all four years of the programme, and with the Presidents of the Student Union present, raised a number of issues which included:

- The lack of student consultation when amendments are introduced to the programme, contrary to university regulations.
- The continuing discrepancy between the regulation of the University and the Study Guide of the programme
- The lack of student participation in the Study Committee or any other university or school committee meetings
- Problems of communication between students and the Governing Body and the School Dean and School Board
- The attitude and behaviour of a few members of part time faculty
- The perception of some students is that some instructors do not devote enough time to students
- The fact that textbooks are out-dated and they are taught obsolete material
- The overlap between certain modules
- The late announcement of examination dates making.
- The lack of experience of online teaching on the part of the instructors
- The lack of training videos for faculty and students
- The unstructured way that some of the face to face meetings are taking place which renders them not as useful as they could be. Students prefer to have lecture delivery by faculty during meetings instead of general open discussions.
- The course material is huge and they find it difficult to cope
- The lack of career and industry liaison offices.
- The widespread perception that graduates of the Open University are not considered as equivalent to graduates of a conventional university.

It should be noted that the above issues were expressed as individual opinions of the students present at the meeting, and the Committee noticed disagreement among the students regarding some of the points. These issues were presented to the Dean and the full-time faculty who responded by acknowledging the validity of some of the problems, but by pointing out also that some other issues were resolved.

The Committee noticed that establishing a modicum of formal communication between students and the School Board will create an environment conducive to attaining the goals of the programme.

The Postgraduate students were overall very happy with the programmes, the teaching material, except where it was considered obsolete, and mode of delivery. They found that faculty were available, helpful and supportive and described the communication between teaching faculty and the programme coordinators as excellent.

RESULTS comment on:

- **Efficiency 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?**

Efficiency of teaching

The results of student

Pevaluations over the last several years indicate that the teaching is generally efficient.

Discrepancies in the success/failure percentage between courses and how they are justified.

The Programme coordinators constantly monitor the student evaluations and have implemented procedures to correct any problems, gaps or discrepancies in the success/failure percentage between modules.

Differences between students in (a) the time to graduation, and (b) final degree grades.

There are no notable differences between students in (a) the time to graduation, and (b) final degree grades. While the final degree grades may reflect true variation in the effort exercised and the ability of the graduates, the time to graduation is based on many other factors originated mainly from the current economic crisis.

Whether the Department understands the reasons of such positive or negative results?

The School understands the reasons for differences between students in the time to graduation and final degree grades.

IMPROVEMENT

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

Does the Department propose methods and ways for improvement?

The School monitors the teaching at all levels with a view to improve it within a reasonable time period. The School has implemented several procedures to promptly improve teaching in cases where weaknesses are identified. The Committee notes that overall the system in place is effective and suits the needs of the majority of the students. The latter had in general very positive comments about the contact sessions, as well as the dedication of the instructors/tutors.

What initiatives does it take in this direction?

- The Dean of the School and the faculty are aware of what needs to be done in order to improve student learning and teaching efficiency. Most of the initiatives that were discussed with the Committee revolved around the resolution of problems and the improvement of delivery and included: The introduction of videoconferencing technology to enhance contact with the students outside the formal contact sessions.
- The alignment of the student guide with university regulations .
- The participation of students in committee meetings at the programme, school and university levels
- The elimination of communication gaps a) between students and the school, and b) between the school and the university
- The continuing monitoring of faculty performance and behaviour , the reviewing of student evaluations and the adoption of corrective actions
- The urgent revision of textbooks
- The institution of committees to review current course syllabi in order to eliminate current overlap between certain modules
- The announcement of examination dates and times well in advance
- The creation and uploading of a) training videos for students b) training videos for faculty
- The creation and uploading of a) student welcoming (by the school Dean, and b) programme welcoming by programme coordinators
- The integration of the career and industry liaison offices to their student benefit
- The introduction of student induction sessions in regular intervals and several locations around Greece

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?**

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

The Hellenic Open University's mission, as stated in the 1992 Law that established it, is to provide distance education at both undergraduate and postgraduate level, by developing and implementing appropriate learning material and methods of teaching. The promotion of scientific research as well as the development of the technology and methodology in the area of distance learning falls within the scope of the Hellenic Open University's objectives.

From our discussions with the President of the University Governing Board, the Dean of the School and the Faculty of the School, it became evident that there is no central strategic research planning and philosophy either at University or School level. At University level this lack of policy was explained by the President as a reflection of the fact that, the primary objective of the University is to teach and given that the University employs only 45 full-time academics (and 1750 external staff) it will never develop the critical mass to pursue serious research. The faculty believes that at the School level, the lack of research policy was attributed to the institutional set up of the University which deprives Schools of any input into policy formulation and budgeting responsibility. As a result research support for faculty research is minimal.

The committee feels that there is a conflict of expectations between the University leadership and the faculty of the School, with the latter believing that research support is essential in maintaining their own academic credibility and that of their programmes.

Despite the lack of any research policy framework at the School of Social Sciences, the Committee was impressed by the efforts of the full time faculty to engage in individual or collaborative research and compete for research funding. Over the last 5 years, the full-time faculty of 13 academics published about 150 articles in refereed journals. In addition most of the faculty is supervising doctoral students.

Has the Department set internal standards for assessing research?

The School of Social Sciences has not set internal criteria and systematic standards or processes for assessing research, but as it is the case with Greek Universities, these are built into the process of hiring and promoting individual faculty.

The committee believes that there should be an explicit set of guidelines/criteria for all faculty members regarding the School's expectations in terms of research output and research involvement. Such policy would iron out the significant differences in research performance amongst the full-time faculty and would ensure that a minimum level of research activity is maintained by all.

Although the Committee recognizes the special operational circumstance of the University, it

is concerned that research is not supported at the institutional level, either in terms of direct research funding (i.e. seed/internal research funding), conference funding, and in particular graduate education support through scholarships for PhD candidates.

IMPLEMENTATION

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

How does the Department promote and support research?

Based on the information provided, it became apparent to the Committee that support is limited to partially providing funding for attending, mostly locally organized, conferences and workshops. However, the Committee strongly recommends that additional resources should be provided to the faculty of the School, on a discretionary basis, by the University.

Quality and adequacy of research infrastructure and support

The Committee did not have the opportunity to inspect any of the research infrastructure but it was assured by the faculty that adequate computing and software facilities are available for research.

Scientific publications, Research Projects and Research collaborations

Despite the limited support, some faculty members have made important contributions in terms of publications in scholarly journals. A number of faculty members have initiated research of projects and others have participated in externally funded research projects. Faculty members have also collaborated successfully with colleagues from other academic institutions and produced high quality published research output.

RESULTS

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

The School's research values are accepted and endorsed by the teaching staff and PhD students. Over the last years the Faculty's teaching staff has produced a number of research publications, some of which in highly regarded journals. Given the rather small number of full time faculty members the number of completed PhD theses and the PhD candidates is satisfactory. The Committee encourages the School to increase its emphasis on the quality and impact (e.g. in terms of citations, etc.) of its research output. The Committee recognizes that it is not easy to publish in top journals, but the international recognition of the School depends on having more publications in better journals, so it advocates that the faculty moves in this direction.

It appears that the School has few active research projects at the moment. The Committee

encourages the School to seek out more of these, because they can be a good source of research funding. At the same time, the Committee understands that, because the number of the full time faculty members is quite small, it is not easy to construct the large teams needed for active research projects. Nevertheless, there are varying degrees of success in translating the output of research projects to scientific publications.

It is the Committee's opinion that the School should try to be systematic in its efforts to establish research collaborations with researchers from other institutions within Greece and internationally. In this way it will be able to focus its research agenda and be able to identify research activities into areas that may have near-term practical applications.

IMPROVEMENT

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

The Committee understands that there is no institutional research vision, and there is very limited institutional support for research. As a consequence, measures should be taken towards the:

- (a) Development of the School's research infrastructure, in the form of research centres or workshops, possibly jointly with other universities or other stakeholders in areas such as banking, cultural management or tourism with an emphasis on focused and application oriented research and where the many graduates of the university would be utilized as a link with the industries.
- (b) Support, via internal/seed funding, of faculty members and emerging research leaders to ensure that they successfully secure external funding within Greece and internationally.

In addition the Committee makes the following recommendations for the School:

- (a) The School should formally define its strategic research direction and major research themes in line with its mission statement, so as to provide clarity and direction to its members in terms of priorities and research standards. Plans should be put forward for implementation.
- (b) The School should have a well-defined process linking research quality to promotions. There are many internationally used journal rankings that can be deployed by the School to assess the quality of various publication outlets.
- (c) The School should pursue a more aggressive effort in attracting sponsored research from European research programmes. This would be facilitated by the development of a closer research collaboration with the industry.
- (d) The School should attract a significant number of high quality PhD students who can make a substantial contribution to the School's research output in the relevant field of knowledge. To make this possible, the Committee suggests that the University should offer a number of PhD scholarships, in addition to waiving their tuition fees, to the most competent candidates. These scholarships could be funded by the industry. Research results at the graduate level should be presented and ranked in internal competition events.
- (e) The School should also ensure that staff have access to databases that are essential tools for high quality research and software that will facilitate the academic staff to produce high quality research.

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?**

How does the Department view the various services provided to the members of the academic community (teaching staff, students).

The University offers centralized administrative support to its Schools (student registration, information technology, etc.). In addition, the School of Social Sciences employs two secretaries for its immediate needs.

There is an Internal Assessment and Training Unit (IATU), which is a university-wide unit that supports the teaching mission of the School. The aims of IATU are: (a) to evaluate all aspects of teaching at the University, including instructors, course modules, educational material and administrative services, (b) training of the teaching staff on distant education methods and (c) research on methods and procedures for quality assurance of teaching assisting technologies. The unit has designed and developed its own electronic platform to carry out its mission. The collected data are tabulated and circulated to all parties involved in the teaching process. The Committee notes that this is a unique unit in the entire Greek University System, and was impressed by the work carried out by it.

The University runs a distance-access library and information service that supports both its teaching and research mission. It makes a special effort to disseminate information with the aid of new technologies and thus align itself to the special characteristics of the University. Library resources are used by students and faculty of the Hellenic Open University as well as by members of the local community. The library also provides access to online material. The Hellenic Open University library in the framework of expanding the inter library loan service is trying to collaborate with other Hellenic Academic libraries in order for students of Hellenic Open University to be able to access their digital content. However, this aspect could be extended much further using some additional resources. Examples of resources that would be considered as standard in other competing institutions include access to a wider range of journals, and in particular to Business Information databases.

The School is overall satisfied with the provision of the central administrative procedures, although it expressed the view that some input into the management of the local administrative services would increase operational effectiveness. It was mentioned for example that when the administrative staff of the School take their annual leave of absence is decided at University rather than School level

Does the Department have a policy to simplify administrative procedures? Are most procedures processed electronically?

The administrative procedures of the School are arranged by the Head of University

Administration. Most of them are processed electronically.

Does the Department have a policy to increase student presence on Campus?

As far as the Committee is aware there is no such policy.

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.).**

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

All the support services including the School's administrative staff are provided centrally. The Committee believes that the centralized nature of administrative support at the University is efficient and economical, although greater communication between the School and the central administrative services would improve operational performance.

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 Committee has only been informed of the library provision and the arrangements the University has entered into with other University libraries to allow its students to use them. The latter is a significant component of the student learning support services and one that the students find extremely helpful.

RESULTS

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

It is the Committee's opinion that the centralized administrative services are adequate and functional, as reflected by the student evaluations. However it seems that greater input of the School into the operation of the administrative services will greatly increase the productivity of the School.

IMPROVEMENTS

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

As the School has minimum input into the design and operation of the services, the School

does not have any blueprint for improvement even in areas, whereas the School is aware of the existence of problems. One problem that the School is trying to resolve is the fact that the library's access to international journals depends on the respective service level agreements between the Greek Ministry of Education and publishers. As a consequence, delays in subscription payments by the Greek Ministry of Education disrupt library operations.

Collaboration with social, cultural and production organizations

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

Although some individual academics have close contacts with the relevant industry and organizations, there is no institutionally initiated policy of establishing and maintaining relationships with such organizations. Given the specialized nature of the postgraduate programmes on offer, such relationships would be beneficial. For instance the MSc in Banking would have benefited from a close relationship with the Union of Greek Banks in terms of feedback to program specification, resourcing the program with practitioners and work placement. Similar comments apply to the case of the Masters in the Management of Tourist Enterprises and the Masters in Management of Cultural Units.

The Committee recommends that the School should manage those relations in a more systematic way (i.e. a Faculty member receives the formal responsibility to organize and coordinate those relations). Equally important is to establish an alumni relations office which could make use of the diverse careers of School's graduates. Possible benefits from the structured and organized relations with banks, chambers of commerce and alumni may, for example, be lectures given by bank executives in different courses. This will strengthen the students' practical skills. Postgraduate students may also gain access to data which will give better opportunity to develop their Masters theses. Implementation of research projects with practical application may also arise.

At present such initiatives are hampered by the lack of full time staff in key areas. For example the School has only one full-time member of staff in Banking and no full-time members of staff in Tourism and Cultural Management. Whereas the current programme directors of the programmes in Tourism and Cultural Management do an excellent job in directing the programmes, it is very difficult for them to spearhead the initiatives mentioned in the previous paragraphs.

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.**

Potential inhibiting factors at State, Institutional and Departmental level, and proposals on ways to overcome them.

The Committee was told during the meetings that the School is facing the following inhibiting factors:

- (a) The inadequate space available for the needs of the School.
- (b) The absence of research budget at the immediate discretion of the School.
- (c) The School is totally deprived of any operational independence since it has no control on the number of students admitted to the programmes of study, the number of faculty positions and the availability or allocation of funds. The participation of faculty in the decision making process is virtually non-existent.
- (d) The central support of research by the University is unsatisfactory considering the fact that funds are available. The present allocation of resources among the Hellenic Open University's Schools seems to be unequal. The School of Social Sciences is under-resourced and the Committee recommends that the University establishes direct funding of the School's research operations effective immediately. The Committee believes that all the Schools of the Hellenic Open University should be funded equally, or alternatively, they should be funded according to the tuitions paid by their students.
- (e) Only a few University centralized projects, independent university-wide units and laboratories are headed by full-time Faculty members of the School of Social Sciences. It appears that there is a discrimination policy against the School of Social Sciences by the current administration. This policy should be halted. All the positions should be open to all full-time Faculty members of the Hellenic Open University.

The School wishes to have access to financial resources which it could use to reward the high performing members of its Faculty, thus recognizing their contribution to its standing and reputation. In addition to the quality of research output, excellent teaching and improvements in the student experience is also valued and the School wishes to reward it and recognize it appropriately.

The Committee finds it useful to urge the School to consider the following issues when thinking about setting plan and actions for improvements:

- (a) The internationalization of the educational programmes offered by reaching to foreign markets would not only increase visibility but will bring about some additional financial resources. Seeking to raise its international profile, the School should aim at building academic bridges with other universities internationally, exchanging students and Faculty members and undertaking joint research and education.
- (b) The availability of secretarial support (one secretary for every, 3-4 faculty members).

- (c) The funding of one PhD candidate for every Faculty member every two years.
- (d) The provision of adequate and contiguous office space for faculty members to encourage interfaculty communications.
- (e) The undertaking of initiatives that would enhance the academic credibility of the Hellenic Open University so that the perception of inferiority of its degrees is reversed.

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 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 Hellenic Open University is the 19th Greek State University, but the only one that provides distance education at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels, via the development and utilization of appropriate learning material and methods of teaching.

The University operates under a complex and rigid set of rules and regulations that stifle innovation in terms of new programmes and course design and delivery. Whatever discretion is afforded to the Schools and programme directors it is used to update teaching material and module content.

It is the view of the EEC that greater operational freedom in terms of course design will help the University to discharge more efficiently and efficaciously its statutory obligations of providing not only a second chance for education but also of upgrading the Hellenic work force via a rigorous but flexible pedagogical paradigm that does not disrupt the working lives of its students.

The current cumbersome legal framework that determines the academic requirements of each course is inappropriate for a modern university, since it deprives the university of the possibility of an immediate response to industry developments, market requirements and academic advances. The current framework of operation seriously disadvantages the School of Social Sciences and its graduates given the narrow focus of its programmes to specific industries.

Responsibility for academic matters related to programme structure, module content and assessment should be delegated to university level without the interference of the Ministry of Education. The University should institute as a matter of course its own internal procedures for quality assessment so that the quality of its provision is maintained and its relevance enhanced. The External Evaluation Committee is of the opinion that the School of Social Sciences operates its programmes at a level comparable to that of its peer universities and provides adequate academic, IT, learning and administrative support to its students at both School and University level.

The EEC would like to emphasize though, that the success of the School and its programmes,

over the last few years, and the successful way the School coped with the doubling of the intake in the last two years is due to a large extent, to the dedication of the staff, both internal and external.

The Specific recommendations of the EEC are as follows:

- (a) The School needs to articulate a clear vision for its future in terms of new initiatives such as new programmes and new methods of delivery.
- (b) The School needs to develop a research strategy to create economies of scale by integrating the research activities of its internal and external staff so that the goal of research-informed teaching for the postgraduate programmes is attained.
- (c) The School needs to institute procedures for quality control of its programmes, by establishing regular meeting of the Programme Directors so that there is a uniform approach to quality and establishment of good practice. This is of paramount importance since a number of Programme Directors are from different universities.
- (d) The Committee was surprised by the statements of members of staff regarding the complete lack of consultation of staff by the Governing Board on purely academic matters. The Committee believes that a two-way system of consultation and exchange of views will eliminate the evident antagonism and help the School to attain its objectives.
- (e) The Committee was also told that suggestions and recommendations to the Governing Board remain unacknowledged. If this is the case, such a state of affairs will certainly sap staff morale and create institutional indifference. We urge the Governing Board to take remedial action and create an environment conducive to creative dialogue and collegiate behaviour.

The quality of some of the texts available for instruction has been questioned. These texts must be periodically evaluated on the basis of detailed, specific evaluations by students and faculty and when needed replaced by corrected versions. Alternatively, the availability of English language texts as either an available, no-cost, option or in the library must be seriously considered.

- (f) The “basic text” distributed in hard form needs to be abolished and replaced by an electronic database for each course containing all the necessary learning material. The content of the library in texts is poor and should be increased. At times the payments for access to scientific journals are not made on time, and the students do not have access to recent literature. This should not happen. Students should also be informed of the library resources available to them. Most students did not realize that they could visit and borrow books from the libraries of other Universities.
- (g) The school needs to establish an extensive program of undergraduate and graduate internships in order to provide students with the ability to connect with Greek businesses.
- (h) One of the issues constraining the School is the module structure of the Curriculum. In the future, the School needs to move away from the annual modular system and potentially break the 12 undergraduate modules into 24 and the 4 graduate modules into 8. This way each module will last one semester. Thus, one of the major student complaints of the accumulation of unrealistic expectation of memorizing substantial material for one end of year exam will be eliminated.
- (i) The School needs to re-examine its admission procedures. Although the present system worked well in the past, it tends to favour the “lucky” students and not the ones with the most abilities. A system that takes into consideration the educational and professional experiences of applicants may be more appropriate.
- (j) The admission procedures also need to be revisited to allow the recruitment of students residing in other countries. There is a strong desire among the faculty to offer their

programmes internationally. However, the present admission framework does not allow it.

- (k) The module coordinators within a specific programme need to coordinate more extensively. It appears to be a replication in certain modules that is viewed negatively by students.
- (l) The learning paradigm currently followed by the HOU does not allow group coursework, depriving the students of the opportunity to develop much needed teamwork skills. Although the scattered population may appear to inhibit the successful operation of such a scheme, the advances in technology render such a scheme very successful whenever it has been applied. We urge the School and the University to adopt this recommendation.
- (m) We believe that the University and the School possess unique capabilities to create a brand name and establish itself as a major international distance learning provider.

The Department's readiness and capability to change/improve

The School has a good grasp of the problems it faces and the solutions to these problems. The Committee firmly believes that the School is ready and capable to take actions to improve within the confines of the current operational framework. However, this requires additional full-time faculty. At a minimum all the programme coordinators should be full-time faculty members.

The Department's quality assurance

The School has quality assurance mechanisms to ensure that teaching is at the required level. The main mechanism is the student evaluation of instructors. This works well and appropriate action is taken by the School once problems are identified. Other mechanisms of quality assurance include the appointment process of visiting staff and the promotion of full-time staff.