



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ

Α.ΔΙ.Π.

ΑΡΧΗ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ

ΑΝΩΤΑΤΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ

HELLENIC REPUBLIC

H.Q.A.A.

HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY

FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

TECHNOLOGICAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE OF ATHENS

DEPARTMENT OF INFORMATICS

November 2008

External Evaluation Committee

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

1. Professor CHRISTOS N. SCHIZAS (Chairperson)
University of Cyprus, Cyprus

2. Professor THANASIS HADZILACOS
Open University of Cyprus, Cyprus

3. Professor GEORGE SAMARAS
University of Cyprus, Cyprus

4. Dr GEORGE FAKAS, Senior Lecturer
Manchester Metropolitan University, Manchester, UK

5. Dr PANAYIOTIS ZAPHIRIS, Reader
City University, London, UK

Introduction

The external evaluation committee (EEC) met from the 24th to the 28th of November to complete the external assessment of the Department of Informatics, TEI of Athens. More specifically: after being briefed by ADIP in the morning of the 24th, in the afternoon the EEC met at the Campus of the TEI, and had a short meeting with the president of the institution, the vice presidents and the head of the Department of Informatics. Then the EEC had an extensive tour of the library and departmental facilities. On the 25th and 26th of November the committee had lengthy discussions with key departmental staff and committees (a complete list is provided below). On the 26th of November a first draft of the report was compiled (where additional needed documents were identified, collected and evaluated) and meetings with students, faculty and technical and administrative staff were held; a preliminary presentation of the findings was made to the department chair. The final version of the report was written on the 27th and 28th of November.

The visits at the TEI of Athens included the following activities:

The committee met with:

- the President of the TEI of Athens (Prof. Demetrios Ninos);
- library personnel;
- the TEI Technical Support team;
- the head of the Department of Informatics, TEI of Athens;
- the academics responsible for the internal assessment report;
- members of academic staff;
- the three division leaders;
- lab assistants;
- technical support personnel;
- students (from different years of study);
- administration personnel.

The committee was also given access to:

- The external assessment evaluation report (by Socratis Katsikas, Antonis Symvonis and Ioannis Tsiadis). This assessment was carried out in 2006 for the period 2003-2005.
- The recently completed internal evaluation report prepared as dictated by H.Q.A.A.

(by Professors Athanasios Tsouropis, Christos Skourlas and Grammati Pantziou).

- The program of Undergraduate studies and the revised version (November 2008).
- The MSc program which is offered since 2004 in collaboration with Limoges University in France.
- Examples of anonymized exam papers.
- Examples of diaries/log books from students' practical training.
- Examples of Textbooks used.
- Examples of student feedback forms.
- Access to e-class (the Department's e-learning system).
- Course syllabus, reviews and specifications.
- CVs of staff.
- Detail breakdown of course grades.
- Student final year project theses .
- Examples of publications / Conference Proceedings and edited volumes (Lecture Notes – Springer).
- Project deliverables.
- Research Proposals.
- Contract between the TEI of Athens and Limoges University in France.

The committee visited:

- the Departmental Facilities;
- the library and the video conferencing facilities for distance learning/teaching;
- teaching classes;
- labs, where the EEC had the chance to observe lab sessions;
- the University networks space including the Greek School Network (GSN) (The Department supports the GRNet HelpDesk of National Research & Technology Network).

A. Curriculum and Teaching

A1. Curriculum

APPROACH

The departmental goals are good but not specific enough to be fully appreciated. In order to develop the program of studies the following have been taken into consideration: (1) International curricula and standards, (2) industry (employers) feedback, and (3) graduates feedback. This was achieved through public conferences and industrial training. Of special notice are two workshops that the department has organized with participation of industry to assess the employability of graduates. Also surveys have been conducted among employers and graduates.

The program of studies does correspond to the specified departmental and social goals and needs, to the extent that the goals of the Department are concrete and societal needs are well defined.

The program was developed through extended discussions within the Departmental faculty staff and taking into consideration other factors such as the local industry. An assessment was also conducted in 2006 by an external committee, mentioned above; their recommendations were taken into consideration as well for restructuring their Program of studies due to be implemented.

IMPLEMENTATION

The program of studies is reasonable regarding breath and depth, as well as theoretical and practical elements.

The law sometimes poses unreasonably exact and stringent specifications (e.g. 2 hours lecture + 2 hour lab for all courses).

There exist procedures for course coordination at a departmental level and through the three existing areas of concentration (divisions).

The program/department needs much more space for offices, labs and lecture rooms. The existing situation is well below international and academically acceptable standards.

The faculty is of good quality as a whole and the newly hired staff enhances the average research standard, which provides indications for further improvement in the future. Note that this assessment was not carried out on an individual faculty basis.

The large number of external collaborators currently hired yearly for supporting the needs of the program and the needs of the other departments in computer science courses creates academic and administrative difficulties.

RESULTS

To the extent that the goals are measurable, the EEC feels that they are met. There is however no formal mechanism for evaluating these goals.

One goal that the EEC believes is not met has to do with the high drop-out rate and long duration of studies (beyond the regular 4 years).

Academic activities are not always carried out as planned and the syllabus is not fully covered due to 'strikes' by students or teachers. Investigating the roots of this problem (such as insufficient resources for higher education) is beyond the scope of this report. It is to a large extent beyond the control of the department but it certainly affects their ability to maximize the achievement of their goals.

The Department definitely understands fully and well the current state of their curriculum and teaching quality and procedures; they seem all to be involved, interested and concerned.

IMPROVEMENT

The main improvements that the department proposes are a new master's program and a new revised curriculum to be applied.

Secondarily some new faculty members and lab equipment are needed. More space is necessary to support the undergraduate program, the new Master program and the uplifting of research initiatives.

The department is very active in taking initiatives such as the new Master's proposed as well as submitting successful research proposals.

The committee feels that some legal/institutional (θεσμικές) changes are called for in order to support an already improving situation in this department.

2-3 additional permanent faculty members are needed as a minimum effort to improve faculty student ratio, and respond to the rapid changes of computer science curricula. Furthermore it is suggested that, where possible, the part time faculty and external collaborators are reduced by substituting them with fulltime permanent staff.

Reduce teaching load for all academic ranks and make it equal for all academic ranks. In addition to this allow further reduction of teaching load for faculty members that bring in competitive research projects. The reduced teaching load can be compensated by the income from these projects.

The curriculum and certain courses could benefit by the increase of the lecture hours from 2 to 3 thus ensuring fuller teaching and learning.

A2. Teaching

APPROACH

Reasonably modern approach including asynchronous e-learning (e-class system) is in actual use and extensively used both by academics and students.

They have extensive lab courses which give strong opportunities for practical experience to students.

The student to teacher ratio is too high. Recently (last year) student numbers were reduced (by around 50%) to a reasonable and manageable level which might also improve drop-out rates. The current facilities are *not* meant for 120 new students per term; 60, which is the new situation, is a more manageable number.

With the new number of students, the teacher to student ratio will be much improved; with the addition of 2-3 faculty (beyond the 2 that have been already given but not yet in place) the ratio will be more reasonable.

There seems to be an unusually good cooperation between active students and faculty; evidenced, among others, by the students' acceptance and assistance to the evaluation procedure for courses.

Infrastructure is mediocre to inadequate but well used; the department needs to be given the opportunity for more efficient procedures and to be able to make their own decisions in making procurements, especially with respect to computing equipment. Notice that computing equipment for an Informatics department is not just 'office equipment' and cannot, in our view, be procured by centralized procedures identical for all departments.

Computing and Network facilities are well used; We believe that the department could be used as a pilot for advanced use of ICT for students both internally (TEI Athens) and nationally (for similar institutions).

We comment favorably on the support given by the Department to the Greek School Network (GSN) and the GRNet HelpDesk of National Research & Technology Network.

The examination system is a standard one; it could be improved by making projects and mid-term exams obligatory and reducing the indefinite number of times that a student can be examined. Reducing the number of years (currently unlimited) that students need to complete their studies would help. The recent reduction of the number of students will also help (especially for individual student advising and counseling).

IMPLEMENTATION

The level and quality of teaching and teaching preparation are good.

The level of textbooks and on-line help is good. (Library texts need updating; strong e-library and e-journal subscription, though.)

The course content is up-to-date.

The link between research and teaching is there, where faculty is involved with research, but needs to be strengthened. The new Master's program aids in that direction.

Students participate in the Erasmus program. Most faculty members have good international contacts. The Limoges cooperation has helped the department significantly.

The students regularly evaluate their teachers through a formal procedure.

RESULTS

Teaching and learning is, generally, successful. Note, however, the large number of dropouts, plus the large number of students registered but actually non-attending. Insufficient data and lack of formal definitions and procedures make it difficult to give exact figures. The EEC made the following calculation: 4642 students have registered since 1983 when the department was established. 1645 have graduated and 1397 have dropped out (διαγραφέντες). Of the currently registered 1600 (aprox.) students, $263+218+110+110=701$ are within the 4 years of study. The remaining 900 may graduate in the future or may drop out. Thus, of the theoretically possible maximum number of 3941 graduates, 42% have graduated, 35% have dropped out and 23% are still 'lingering' in the department. This situation is unfortunately encouraged by TEI regulations which allow students to register in an unrealistically high number of courses which they do not attend but for which they only sit in exams. The EEC believes that stricter regulations would result in a smaller dropout rate.

The EEC did not check differences in success/failure between courses; the EEC noted, however, that grades appear to be leaning towards medium levels (the percentage of students scoring about 8.5/10 is extremely low); this is in spite of evidence that the students' success in public examinations (ΑΣΕΠ), employment and graduate studies is high.

The length of studies beyond 6 years is not justified; the usual excuse of 'working students' was not well documented.

The department is fully aware of their strengths and weaknesses; the faculty members are concerned and interested in their teaching; reducing their teaching load (to normal internationally accepted load) will not only result in better research but also in better teaching; one should bear in mind that in Computer Science the course content must be renewed more often than in other areas (effort for content revision could be considered a teaching load).

IMPROVEMENTS

The department would like to see teaching load reduced; at least, as a first step. The law that states that internship supervision should be counted toward teaching load should be applied.

The department needs better lab facilities, both as space and as equipment.

The department needs much more office space. It is quite unacceptable to have 3 or 4 faculty members residing in one small office. This handicaps its educational and research abilities and goals at large.

B. Research

APPROACH

There is a basic contradiction between the legal and institutional framework for research in TEI on the one hand and the requirements for faculty advancement as well as their need and desire to remain active researchers on the other. The legal and institutional framework for research in TEI does not make research compulsory for teaching staff; it does not set research as a goal for the department; and, therefore, it does not provide the necessary preconditions for research including infrastructure, post-graduate and doctorate programs, financing and appropriate working terms for faculty. On the other hand, the law clearly and very reasonably requires research work from faculty for their advancement; even more importantly, a higher education teacher must remain active in research in any field and especially so in a fast-changing field such as Computer Science. This contradiction is accentuated in the Informatics Department of the Athens TEI because of the personal desire and practice of the department faculty members who do not use this contradiction as an excuse, but go to great efforts to continue conducting research in what is often an adverse environment for the purpose.

Thus, the main goal of the Department with respect to research is to form and keep a small number (5-7) of internationally recognized active research teams in areas such as applied AI and graphics; parallel and distributed computation; educational technology; information retrieval; network technology. This research is inadequately financed by research grants and almost not at all by the TEI and the State. Often TEI are institutionally excluded from participating in research proposals and, in some cases, discriminated against by Universities who oppose their participation (although they welcome the personal participation of some TEI faculty as researchers). A couple of faculty members participate in such projects. This lack of funding misdirects research efforts at a TEI, since theoretical research is less costly.

The Department considers their joint international Masters program with Limoges as a cornerstone of their strategy for research, through which the Department gains graduate students, recognition and long-term viability irrespective of the continuity breaks in research funding.

Research infrastructure is scantily available. The existing limited infrastructure is donated or obtained from finished projects rather than official funds from the Institute or Department. The committee believes that more research infrastructure is required, such as space, equipment (both software and hardware) and post-graduate students.

IMPLEMENTATION

Research publications

Most, though not all, faculty members are active in research and publish in international journals and conferences. Among the publications listed by the department several are co-authored with researchers outside the TEI, whilst others are within the department. Details of research publications are documented in the internal evaluation report. The following table gives an abstract summary of the department's publications.

year	Books	Scientific journals	Peer reviewed conferences
2008	1	10	19
2007	2	14	45
2006	2	14	33
2005	0	20	35
2004	0	9	16
2003	1	12	28
Total	6	79	176

Research programs

As a department, they participate in some programs (e.g. Archimedes) which were open explicitly for TEI. Sometimes regulatory restrictions inhibit their participation in certain research program calls. However, they can participate as individual researchers. The research projects of the Department are distributed among seven different thematic research groups.

The funded *Archimedes* projects were competitive and staff had to prepare proposals. It is worth mentioning that the department had several successful project proposals. In the Archimedes call, at an acceptance rate (6/8) which is significantly higher than the national average (1/2) of the specific call. The Department also received funding for a project from GSRT (*ITET*) from the programme *Information Society*.

Research collaborations

The new faculty members of the department continue their collaboration with their former universities and at the same time seek for new collaborations. This is evidenced by their joint research publications.

The staff appeared to be very well aware of the mediocre resources and infrastructure at the department and therefore realize the importance of external links. More precisely research collaborations exist with:

- other academic units of the institute; e.g. Library Science Department, (Βιβλιοθηκονομία), Electrical etc.
- other national institutes, both universities and TEI (e.g. Aegean University, University of Patras, Ionian University, University of Pireas, TEI Thessalonikis, TEI Kavalas, TEI Patras, TEI Kritis, NRC Demokritos etc.)
- other overseas institutes, e.g. University of Limoges, France

Furthermore, in the context of the collaboration with Limoges University several post-graduate theses were jointly supervised. Some of these PhD students also participated in the Archimedes funded projects.

RESULTS

The committee believes that the research results are very satisfactory, considering the departmental goals and the available infrastructure. As stated in the previous section, several research publications and programs were achieved.

Several theses were completed jointly with Limoges University; six PhD students completed their theses in this framework. In addition, 2 post-doctoral, 7 post-graduates and many final year students carried out their theses in the context of funded projects.

The recognition of the department's research was documented with papers' citation obtained by Google Scholar. These results were moderate; this was anticipated to some extent as the more mature work of the department is very recent and therefore still early to attract citations justifying their impact. Participation in Organizing Committees of Conferences is also indicated. Research recognition also resulted in an increase in graduate intake.

The publications are in respectable venues. There is a relatively good conference involvement and the department seems ready to publish in conferences of higher acceptance rates.

The department has produced one patent (however, it was partially developed elsewhere). There is not any additional evidence of application of the research outcomes.

IMPROVEMENT

The Department realizes the needs of additional office space for researchers, modern research lab facilities and post-graduate students. They also need supportive institutional framework (θεσμικό πλαίσιο) and research funding.

The Department realized the need to continue participation in research projects in various forms (coordinator, participant etc). The department is actively trying to find research funding, but is currently in a very difficult position because the old projects have finished and new national calls have not been announced yet. They recognized that the existing momentum should continue.

Initiatives relating to the creation of the masters program will enhance its research outlook through the participation of qualified graduate students.

During the current year only 20,000€ have been allocated for purchasing research equipment.

C. All Other Services

APPROACH

The departmental administrative services are fragmented, essentially split into Student Affairs and Departmental Services.

The departmental staff expects very rudimentary services from their extremely understaffed administrative services. Similarly, they appear to have reasonable, but not high, expectations from their technical services.

IMPLEMENTATION

Administrative services are, in spite of the good will of the low in number personnel, rather disorganized. We were unable to derive a list of duties from personnel, an organizational chart, a list of procedures and a clear flow of paper work. There appears to be an absence of quality assurance mechanisms.

The administrative services are evidently understaffed, although it is impossible to document it as there are no formal or informal rules and regulations and procedures regarding distribution of duties and responsibilities.

Administration is fragmented: TEI, School, Department, Students have different administration services and the EEC was shown no formal or informal written procedures for coordination among the various levels.

We identified cases where people were not even aware of who their supervisor is.

ICT services to students and staff are mediocre. Computers, networks and wireless network exist. Limited amount of Labs existed containing limited amount of machines. The academic and technical staff made reference to an Institute-wide wireless network, but during our presence we were not able to verify this as we were not able to connect to the Wifi network. We understand that this might be due to the network being restricted to only staff and students.

Despite the weaknesses in the quality and quantity of printed computer science books, mentioned earlier, the library facilities are of high standard, and the building is bright new with professional staff and student facilities (including a teleconference room). The library staff are knowledgeable and aware of new trends in their professional practice.

We didn't see any evidence of cultural, athletic et al. services to the students. It appears that the department is not involved in organizing such activities.

Career Consulting to students started recently.

RESULTS

Administrative services are neither effective nor efficient. Their concept of 'service' is rather poor. They have no experience of what advanced higher institution services should consist of and very little legal leeway to apply it even if they did.

Technical services are reasonable but not advanced.

The Department (faculty and students) appears to have resigned from expecting high-quality services, especially since the situation up until a few months ago was even worse with only two persons staffing administration.

IMPROVEMENTS

The department is aware of the situation but it has no plan for improvement.

All their initiatives are restricted in asking for more personnel without formally and convincingly justifying this.

D. Strategic planning, perspectives for improvement and potential inhibiting factors

The committee notes that the department has developed a strategy for academic development in 2002. Their strategy included an external evaluation initiated by them and carried out in 2006. Their plan reacted positively to the Law 2916/2001 and they received specific funding for their programs.

Their plan of action (p. 87 of the internal evaluation report) is realistic and reasonable. Since 2003 they have implemented a large part of it.

The department needs now a further strategic plan for the period 2009-2014. Their current plan correctly places emphasis on graduate studies, but it should also include some major items which are not in their control, namely space and modern infrastructure. Regarding research, the main issue is a direction towards high quality, internationally recognizable, applied research.

The law for TEI regarding research is definitely an inhibiting factor so far as this specific Department is concerned. Space, technological infrastructure, funding and graduate students are necessary and not provided for in the laws for TEI. These are exactly the strategic goals of the Athens TEI Informatics Department:

- Space (no current plan –just hopes for other departments moving out and occupying their space)
- Technological infrastructure (small funding from national and international projects; it is important for ΕΣΠΙΑ to start with no further delay)
- Funding (ditto)
- Graduate studies (specific plan; they have made the application for a joint program with Limoges)
- Doctoral students (they can only participate on a personal basis in doctoral committees at other institutions)
- Reduce teaching load to meet international standards

The whole institution (Athens TEI) is ambivalent towards its Informatics Department: on the one hand it is proud for having a successful department in terms of students, faculty, national and international recognition, success in public examinations etc and on the other hand they are hesitant in providing them with resources that would constitute ‘unequal treatment’ towards other departments. The Committee feels that (a) some competitive (as opposed to equal) funding from the Athens TEI should be made available to all departments, (b) some earmarked national funding from the state should be made available to TEI ‘centres of excellence’, and (c) reduce teaching load to meet international standards so as to strengthen teaching and promote research (More recommendations at the end of the report.)

The recent reduction of the student number admitted is a positive step for the implementation of the Department plans and should not be reversed in the future.

E. Conclusions

The overall impression of the Committee regarding the state of the department is positive. Faculty members at large are of a high level, they work well together, they are interested in and care for their Department. New faculty recruitments continue to enhance an already good level. The Committee feels that the Internal Evaluation Report is sincere and reflects the true situation of the Department and is the result of extensive consultations among all members of staff. The Committee also feels that the faculty members mean their stated plans; their past record shows that they have been able to implement some of them, to the extent that external factors allowed it. The students seem satisfied and have good relationships with their teachers; however, there is a large number of drop outs (~35%) to which a large percentage of students 'registered' for more than 4 years (~23%) should be added; the department seemed unaware of the details of student flow and was not able to provide us with fully accurate data regarding this matter. They combine well modern (asynchronous e-learning) with classic (lab-based and lecture) teaching methods to produce satisfied, successful and sought-after graduates –although there is not sufficient data to quantify this finding. They have reasonably good contacts with the industry. The research record, practice and effort at the department go beyond what is required and usual at a TEI considering the means and support they get. Services provided to the school and institute networks are good and provide students with a chance for high-level practical experience.

The Committee feels that the case of the Informatics Department of the Athens TEI may well be a 'best practice' case, that should be supported and provided with resources beyond what is usually given to TEI departments; it is evident that the institutional framework (το θεσμικό πλαίσιο) for research at TEIs in general is inadequate in this particular case.

The level of technical services is mediocre, although they utilize existing resources well; administrative and other services are in urgent need for improvement: the number of staff available is too small; they receive no training; they lack formal procedures and modern electronic service infrastructures; 'external' loads (service courses to other TEI Athens departments) add an extra administrative load.

The Department has had in place a coherent strategy for their development since 2003; it has been implemented to a significant degree and now has reached the point where external changes are called for (space, teaching load, institutional framework for research; funding; professional administration and technical services); the current thrust of their strategy is the graduate program of studies they are conducting with the University of Limoges and research links (e.g. through co-supervision of PhDs) they are trying to establish with colleagues there.

We summarize our key findings in the following table:

Curriculum	Teaching	Research	Services	Strategy
<i>Program – Approach</i> Good but needs better specification.	<i>Teaching – Approach</i> Very good – better facilities (especially labs) needed.	<i>Research- Approach</i> Very good (considering the means and support)	<i>Services-Approach</i> Poor and not well organized.	<i>Strategy- Approach</i> Very good; initiated external evaluation in 2003
<i>Program– Implementation</i> Good – There is a need for more space (office space, classrooms), labs, need for 2-3 additional faculty members	<i>Teaching– Implementation</i> Very good - includes asynchronous e-learning	<i>Research- Implementation</i> Very good in spite of institutional difficulties	<i>Services- Implementation</i> Poor – Based on personal ad hoc initiative (φιλότερμο) Inadequate: number of staff; staff training; procedures; e-infrastructure	<i>Strategy- Implementation</i> Very good - applied since 2003;
<i>Program – Results</i> Good – Up to date; need to improve dropout rate; reduce number of courses in which students may ‘register’; take measures to reduce allowed length of study	<i>Teaching- Results</i> Very good: high graduate employability and satisfaction.	<i>Research- Results</i> Very good (considering the means and support) – several teams, both publications and projects	<i>Services-Results</i> Poor except technical which can be rated as mediocre; little to no athletic/cultural/other activities for students.	<i>Strategy- Results</i> Very good – several targets met, most of what depended on the Department
<i>Program – Improvement</i> Need to reduce teaching load; need to pilot production of advanced digital learning material.	<i>Teaching- Improvement</i> Reduce teaching load; pilot advance ITC teaching and learning methods	<i>Research- Improvement</i> Specify and follow ‘applied research areas’. Identify long term strategies; establish bodies to oversee their implementation Research labs & space for research associates	<i>Services- Improvement</i> Poor – no plan; need professional assistance	<i>Strategy- Improvement</i> Need institutional (θεσμικές) changes

Graduate Program

The department, as already mentioned, participates in a Masters program in collaboration with the Department of Informatics of the University of Limoges. As of last year the department co-offers this with the University of Limoges, having the actual course taught by their faculty at premises and utilizing teleconference facilities. The graduates, however, receive their degree from the French University. The committee is unable to give detail evaluation of this program as the first actual graduates will be graduating during this coming year. Nevertheless, the committee commends the efforts of the department for this as it is well into the right direction in developing its own Masters programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Resources needed:

Space

In our view, if only one single point is implemented as a result of this evaluation it should be office and research lab space for the department which is of paramount importance for the further development of the department. Each faculty member should have a modest but private office (12-15 m²); a 50-75 m² research lab per active research group for work done by undergraduate students (thesis), graduate students (including PhD students), research associates working in projects and ad hoc (external) faculty. There are currently 5-6 active research groups. The department should draw a new facilities plan with 10-15 year projection.

Technical infrastructure

Research: Access to state of the art research equipment is needed. Needs should be specified by the academic staff who will lead each research group and procurement processes for ordering such equipment should be improved with the Department having a decisive role.

Teaching: As stated earlier in our report, we believe that the department could potentially be a local and national exemplar of good use of e-learning technologies (e.g. e-class). We suggest further support to the local e-class team both in terms of staff (e.g. technical manager of e-class) and infrastructure (servers for multimedia streaming).

Administrative infrastructure

There is a need for additional staff. The current size of the administration office is poor and does not fit with the departmental goals and plans or the current workload.

The current staff need specific staff training that relates to secretarial studies and staff management.

The department has weak quality control procedures. The EEC believes this can be substantially improved through seeking professional help in this area.

E-services should be further promoted and enhanced (e.g. online registration of students, scheduling).

Enhancement and expansion of administrative space needed (especially given our recommendation for an increase in administrative staff).

Funding

Substantial research funding is needed (both in terms of infrastructure and direct funding for research projects that could enhance the current research activities of the department).

The current funding support for conference participation (2 conferences/year) is a good initiative but should be strengthened (some more active research staff might need to attend more than 2 conferences/year). Travel funds should also be provided for international cooperation meetings.

The committee recommends the opening of 3 new junior faculty positions.

Teaching load

The committee strongly believes that one of the key obstacles to further development of the department (in all terms: Research, administration and teaching quality) are primarily due to teaching overload. Reduction in teaching load is thus recommended which can be affected as follows: apply the regulations considering student internships supervision as teaching; offer teaching reduction as a reward for competitive research project gain.

Internal decisions recommended

The internal report states a number of existing departmental committees. We believe that there is a need for a better quality control on the management and operation of these committees. For example: documented goals, minutes and allocation of duties should be kept and reflected on.

Given our recommendations for further enhancement of the current research activities of the department we suggest the establishment of a Research Committee or a Research Head who will oversee the development and implementation of a clear research strategy, policies and activities. The research head should be treated at equal level to the existing group leaders (διευθυντές τομέων) and become a permanent member of the departmental board.

A comprehensive system for tracking student flow and alumni employment paths should be put in place. The system would give data on student course failure and drop out, and on graduate short-term and long-term employment.

Encourage and give priority:

We believe that the current collaboration with Limoges should be strengthened and encouraged. A graduate program is definitely a good opportunity for further international collaborations.

The Members of the Committee

Name and Surname	Signature
1. Professor CHRISTOS N. SCHIZAS (Chairperson)	
2. Professor THANASIS HADZILACOS	
3. Professor GEORGE SAMARAS	
4. Dr GEORGE FAKAS, Senior Lecturer	
5. Dr PANAYIOTIS ZAPHIRIS, Reader	