



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ

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HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY

ΑΝΩΤΑΤΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ

FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

DEPARTMENT OF NURSING A & NURSING B

TEI OF ATHENS

JUNE 2011

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Introduction

I. The External Evaluation Procedure

The EEC on the 31st of May met with members of HQAA for orientation and the opportunity to ask any questions during or after an presentation overview. The EEC also met with members of HQAA on the 8th of June for debriefing.

The committee of the external evaluation (EEC) carried out site visits between 31st May and 2nd of June, while the report was prepared between 3rd and 5th of June 2011. The EEC engaged in a number of discussions, made observations, and held meetings with academic staff, clinical staff, administrative staff and students of both undergraduate and postgraduate level. The first day of the official visit included meetings with senior academics of the TEI and a number of academic staff members of the two departments. A formal presentation from both departments took place and the EEC had the opportunity to ask questions and clarify issues. The presentation was based on the internal evaluation document that the EEC committee had previously received by the Departments through the HQAA.

The EEC also met with the president of TEI, vice president and other senior members of TEI. The second day the EEC visited the TEI facilities and met with a total of 4 groups of students, graduates and undergraduates (some student meetings were scheduled and others unscheduled), and met with the training staff of laboratories. The third day met with the director of nursing services, visited two hospitals that train the students (one state and one private hospital), and finally met with the members of internal committee for debriefing.

Reports, documents and other data examined by the committee

- 1) The internal evaluation report, associated documents and a copy of the presentations summarising the reports and providing other metric characteristics for the two departments
- 2) The student's guide for the departments
- 3) Copies of student evaluations
- 4) Copies of project work and dissertations
- 5) Copies of marked exam scripts
- 6) List of publications and staff CVs
- 7) Samples of assessment documents, including clinical placement assessment documents
- 8) Curriculum documents

II. The Internal Evaluation Procedure

A number of documents were made available to EEC for review and information. These included, the power point slide presentation of the two departments, the internal review documents, study and student guides that included the course outline, the curriculum, evaluation of courses, postgraduate studies and other documents (e.g questionnaire and course evaluations). The original copies of student evaluations were also made available. The EEC has finally the chance to look at exam scripts of different marks, undergraduate project

work and postgraduate dissertations. The appropriateness and the quality of the documents provided was good and the department eagerly facilitated any requests for review that were not included in the original programme. The EEC feels that all the required evidence to meet the objectives of the evaluation were reviewed.

General comments about the evaluation process

The TEI staff exhibited an outstanding level of cooperation, transparency, and ability to respond without ever making the EEC feeling unwelcomed or overbearing even when the committee did “impromptu” changes such as walking in classes and speaking to the student groups not originally on the schedule. The staff appeared interested and eager to learn of ways to improve their programme and repeatedly the EEC was told that the staff was looking to EEC’s comments and especially the critical comments. All in all the attitude and behavior of the staff was extremely professional, respectful and above all seemed entirely genuine making EEC feel that their demanding job and time invested in the external evaluation was worthwhile. In general, the EEC notes that the department should be congratulated for its eagerness to participate fully in the process of the external evaluation by offering unrestricted access to people, locations and documents as well as making necessary practical arrangements to ensure the EEC’s hospitality which impressed the committee.

In one of the four groups of students EEC met with, which was a postgraduate group, there were a few students of a certain leftist political ideology that made statements indicating that they were misinformed and misinterpreted the visit, verbally attacking the EEC members. However, to their credit they stayed until the session was completed, hearing therefore the views of the other students and showing some respect to the EEC. This group was clearly against any kind of external evaluation. While freedom of speech is imperative and expected in any academic institution, imposition of extreme views is disruptive, undemocratic and prohibits improvements in the quality of studies.

A. Curriculum

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

PREAMBLE

This report deals with both the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes unless otherwise stated.

Also, the EEC has assessed both Nursing A and Nursing B departments together as a single unit.

APPROACH

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

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMME

The curriculum aims at training general nurses to:

1. attain high level of knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for the practice of nursing as a science
2. be competent professionals, able to work in all levels of health-care albeit primary, secondary or tertiary.
3. be willing and able to continue their professional development and the improvement of knowledge and skills through critical evaluation of their day to day practice, research and life-long learning process
4. seek the development of education, practice and research of nursing at the highest possible level.

The plan for achieving these objectives is clearly detailed in the curriculum document (Odigos Spoudon).

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

The objectives are decided upon by the curriculum committee which meets as frequently as necessary. This committee is a small group of academic staff but it does not include students nor clinical staff. Their propositions are reviewed and approved by the departmental management committee ('sinelefsi'). The standards are following European Union directives for nursing education, the recommendations of the advisory committee for nursing education (ACTN), the Hellenic Nursing Regulation Agency and the standards stated by the World Health Organisation (WHO).

It appears there is no formal process of consultation with other stakeholders, although such discussions may have taken place on an informal basis due to the excellent relations the department has demonstrated with the various stakeholders, including clinical staff and students. However, in selected areas it seems that wider consultation is used, for example with the clinical settings.

POST GRADUATE TAUGHT PROGRAMMES

There are 5 postgraduate taught programmes, four of which are jointly run with the University of Athens (Medical School) and one with the University of Thrace.

The overall aim of these programmes is to produce highly educated nursing scientists. This is achieved through high level academic studies and research.

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

UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM

Based on what we have read and discussed with staff and students, the curriculum is meeting its objectives and produces skilled and knowledgeable nurses. The constraints placed by the Ministry of Education's regulations make the curriculum development less responsive to the needs of society and limits the creativity within the curriculum team. While the curriculum is relatively nursing-centric, there is room to further incorporate in the curriculum essential nursing material for the purpose of improving the adequacy of health care delivery and the society needs by limiting the medical subjects covered by equivalent nursing subjects.

POSTGRADUATE CURRICULUM

The curriculum is consistent with European standards of postgraduate learning and attempts to deal with issues of clinical and societal needs. All five programmes provide an excellent opportunity for specialist nursing training and leadership. The EEC's discussions with the postgraduate students clearly show that they are very satisfied with all aspects of their programmes.

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

The Department has set a number of committees to review and revise the curriculum, including evaluation and review curriculum committee and the committee to identify procedures for curriculum evaluation. There are other committees that feed to the curriculum committee, for example the final year project committee and the clinical placement committee etc.

IMPLEMENTATION

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

The delivery, from the students' point of view, is excellent. Structurally, there is coherence within the curriculum; however, the EEC is of the opinion that some content is unnecessary and/or inappropriate, for example, the content of "Surgery" (Semester C) could be omitted and that of "Surgical Nursing" (Semester D) could be enhanced. Although the curriculum content is relatively nursing-centric there is an inappropriate amount of medical knowledge which may perhaps be a reflection of the history of nursing education and medical pressures which continue to exist today and which have been articulated by the academic staff.

The infrastructure (library facilities, classrooms and teaching building) are inadequate in meeting the needs of the curriculum. One of the major problems identified by both students and staff is the fact that the teaching building ESPA is at considerable distance (approx 5Km) away from the main campus which creates a number of practical and organisational problems. For example, the students have reported that insufficient time is allocated for travelling between sites which results in arriving at some lectures/labs late. Because the

theory elements (delivered at ESPA building) are taught prior to the lab sessions (delivered at the main campus) the students reported that they frequently decide not to attend the theory sessions in preference to arriving at their lab sessions in time.

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

The broad aims of the curricula are comparable to appropriate and universally accepted standards. They are underpinned by appropriate philosophical positions, combine theory and practice well and have a logical and coherent structure. The well-structured clinical education is one of the greatest assets of the programme. The EEC is content that the education standards that are set will be acceptable to any member state of the EU as minimum, and the academic rigour is equivalent to a Bachelor /Master degree respectively.

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

UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMME

In our view some of the content is not appropriate such as many of the subjects which are taught by doctors, -surgery, pathology, paediatrics. These courses are appropriately covered in their equivalent nursing subjects and are appropriately taught by nurses for nurses, i.e. surgical nursing as opposed to surgery, paediatric nursing as opposed to paediatrics etc., the former being the appropriate and acceptable content for the nursing discipline. Also, some units are offered as electives, where they should be core units as they represent a large proportion of the knowledge that graduates need to have to care for patients that currently populate health care services, such as cardiology and oncology; this way the programme will also be based more on current health care trends and needs.

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

One of the greatest assets of the Department is its peoplepower. The EEC is extremely impressed and satisfied both by the high level of knowledge among the academic staff members and their extremely supportive nature towards the students, often beyond the 'call of duty' and despite limited resources. This was an overwhelming and consistently evident message communicated to the EEC by all students both verbally and documented in the student evaluations we have read during our visit.

There is a small number of staff offices that a large number of staff have to share and thus this arrangement does not allow for student support and the execution of academic duties and activities in a safe, confidential and appropriate environment. Teaching of theory sessions is delivered in an outmoded building (ESPA) with lack of teaching facilities that are not conducive to teaching and learning. In addition to our brief experience in the building, the EEC has been told by both students and staff that often this building is too hot, lacks appropriate ventilation and it is too noisy, being located by one of the most busy roads in Athens.

The physical setting of the main campus and the location of the ESPA building (where all theory teaching takes place) creates practical and organisational problems that make the situation even worse. With regards to labs, library and computer facilities, students are often experiencing access difficulties. These include limited out-of-hours access to labs and library, high demand of labs by other students of other departments and transportation issues between the ESPA building and the main campus. The low turn-out of students in

many theory sessions is an added problem. In terms of subject bibliography, there seems to be a heavy reliance on textbooks, often outdated, and little emphasis on current journal publications.

The curriculum document is lacking in detail for every subject about both the assessment of each one (with appropriate and clear marking percentage/grids) and its evaluation process. These all do take place, and they are done well as the EEC has observed, but they are not always written in a consistent manner.

RESULTS

The EEC believes that the current undergraduate and postgraduate curricula are sufficient in achieving the department's goals and objectives. This was verified by the students who expressed how much they are enjoying the course and how much they are learning despite the resource limitations outlined above. The Department formally evaluates its goals with the students and discusses issues with them in an effort to improve them. The EEC is confident that issues are appropriately identified and dealt with as much as the academic staff are able to.

IMPROVEMENT

The EEC is content to see that a number of issues are quickly and appropriately attended to by the staff, often by improvising and persevering well beyond their expected duties. The academic staff are aware that improvements need to be made and they welcome opportunities to do so. Having said that, the current (revised) curricula are under 3 years old and it is admirable as to how much has been achieved within this limited period of time in spite of external and internal constraints and challenges.

B. Teaching

PREAMBLE

This report deals with both the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes unless otherwise stated.

APPROACH:

According to the documentary evidence provided to the EEC, the teaching approach used by the department is a mixed approach and student-orientated model of teaching and learning (including face to face, group work, tutorial and practice based learning). E-learning has been introduced recently and it is the intention of the department to make wider use of this. This pedagogic approach is welcomed by both students and staff. The EEC has discussed with the teachers the concept of evidence-based learning, an approach which was recently introduced by the Department. The EEC is confident that this pedagogic approach will be employed more widely in the delivery and development of teaching in the future.

A significant strength of the programme is its high quality clinical education which is evident by the high levels of student satisfaction and the EEC's observations during the site visits. Students enter the clinical field in Semester 2 for two days per week and are provided with a number of diverse clinical experiences that meet the EU directives. The students are supervised by well-prepared clinical teachers capable of applying theory to practice. Academic staff also visit the clinical areas regularly to support clinical teachers and students. In this way, a high level of collaboration between hospitals and the Department is built and maintained. Although formal contracts for the provision of access to each clinical site exist, these are largely developed through informal processes between staff and can therefore be tentative.

Overall, the teaching methods employed by the Department are widely used internationally in higher education and the EEC believes that they are comparable to approaches used within the EU and beyond and they are appropriate for achieving the programme's learning outcomes.

The teaching staff/student ratio is as high as 1:45 if one counts the full-time academic nursing staff only. This ratio can be different if one considers that 50% of the theoretical courses are delivered by members of a different Department - the Basic Sciences Department - within the Faculty (SEYP). This ratio is inadequate and needs to be addressed. The number of the core academic staff is disproportionately low to the number of students admitted.

- **Teacher/student collaboration**

Internal evaluations that were provided by the Department, face-to-face discussions with four groups of students across the programme, and meetings in clinical settings overwhelmingly indicate that the professional relationship between students and teachers is outstanding, leading to effective and productive collaborations. The students are able to receive support from the teachers not only for academic matters and tutorials, but also for pastoral care which is open, empathic, sensitive and of high quality. This strongly indicates the dedication and commitment of staff to facilitate a high quality learning and supportive environment for all the students.

- Adequacy of means and resources

The academic staff and the students are not always supported in their efforts to create a high quality learning environment. This refers to inadequate teaching buildings (ESPA building), aids, lab equipment, administrative support, office space for staff, and rooms for tutorial work. Under European directives, health and safety should be a priority in the working environments. For example, these directives indicate what is the required working space for each staff member, etc. This is an issue that the TEI management and Ministry of Education should consider across all departments and schools of the institution. More one-to-one and group tutorials are necessary. These are currently limited as a result of the sheer number of students and space limitations.

- Use of information technologies

The EEC has been shown examples of e-learning packages used in the delivery of education to students. This is innovative and excellent resource, but it is in an early stage of its development and needs to be supported by the TEI management and the Ministry of Education. Collaborations with other departments within the TEI of Athens, for example the Information Technology, are proven fruitful and the EEC believes that this should be further encouraged as an example of good practice. The staff have taken their own initiative to develop such packages and should be praised for the development of this e-learning system and their proactive approach.

- Examination system

The examination system determined by the Ministry of Education across the board heavily relies on written memory exams (i.e. at the end of the semester). The view of the EEC is that this does not fully promote the principles of adult education and does not allow for critical thinking to develop. The over-reliance on written exams (60:40 rule) should be reduced and the use of critical assignments and case studies should be encouraged more. Other, less passive learning methods, need to be embraced and encouraged (e.g. critical case reviews or reflective diaries and teaching methods that enable reflective and evidence-based learning). The EEC has discussed the exams system with students across the programme and it was content to see that the students, while they found assignments and other active learning methods more difficult, they liked them more than exams and they found them more helpful in better understanding the given topic. Assessments should also include student presentations.

IMPLEMENTATION

- Quality of teaching procedures

As previously mentioned, the students have reported to be highly satisfied with the teaching procedures they have been exposed to.

- Quality and adequacy of teaching materials and resources.

Overall, the students reported that they were very satisfied with accessing electronic literature databases and being able to print learning material which they judged to be useful to them, such as research articles. However, they have experienced some problems with the distribution of key textbooks and they reported that some of the books are outdated. Students reported that services such as the library and computer /clinical labs should be more student-friendly. For example, be accessible for longer hours during the day and in the evenings, something that will suit those with social and employment responsibilities.

- Linking of research with teaching

As previously discussed, teachers are endeavoring evidence-based nursing through their teaching and E-learning. The EEC is confident that this will continue to improve based on the interviews with staff and the fact that the majority of staff hold doctorates. The EEC would like to congratulate the Department in their significant scholarly endeavors as demonstrated by the establishment of two peer-reviewed journals (Health Science Journal and the VIMA tou Asklipiou), a "journal club" and a society ('Etairia') of research in health science. The latter developments in particular involve students and provide a role model for evidence-based practice.

- Mobility of academic staff and students

According to the documentation provided to the EEC, the Department is taking part in European programmes such as Erasmus-Socrates and Leonardo da Vinci, which provide opportunities for both staff and student exchanges. The staff's initiative to promote and develop such programmes within the Department should be highly praised. In 2009-10, 15 students took part in Erasmus programmes in Finland, Holland, Spain, Sweden and England. Also, in 2009-10, 8 members of the academic staff participated in teacher exchange programmes in the Czech Republic, Belgium, Finland, Sweden and England.

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

The academic staff are evaluated by students every 6 months through the use of a questionnaire developed by the Department's Evaluation Committee. The evaluations are anonymous from the point of view of the student and they are distributed during classes in weeks 8 to 10 of each module/course. The questionnaires from each course are coded by the responsible Department administrator who enters the data in a computer analysis package which are then analysed by a member of the academic staff.

In summary, the evidence provided to the EEC indicates that the students are highly satisfied with the teaching, course content and organisation. The students who completed evaluation forms reported concerns with the explanations provided about the basic principles demonstrated in clinical labs, and that handouts provided during clinical labs are lacking in detail. The Department is aware of these issues and it is taking steps to address them appropriately and timely. The EEC would like to note the low percentage of students that have contributed to such evaluations, hence the overall picture may be different from that currently reported had all students had taken part.

RESULTS

As described in detail in earlier sections, there is high quality teaching through knowledgeable doctorate-level educated and motivated academic staff. This is an area of consistent and overwhelming satisfaction by the students. Nevertheless, there seems to be a significant number of students failing in specific courses such as Anatomy and Physiology which impacts negatively on completion rates. The completion time should be 4 years and currently is about 5.7 years which is primarily the result of the Greek higher education system that allows students to register for courses for many years; this appears to be endemic to the Greek education system. The EEC finds it hard to comprehend how this can be economically satisfactory for the country at large. This trend must be reversed. Furthermore, extremely high transfer rates from other TEI nursing departments are also a significant problem, although the recent

announcement of forthcoming legislation to combat this is very welcomed.

The department is fully aware of the economical and paedagogical implications of prolonged completion rates and is considering ways to improve this within the limits imposed by the Ministry of Education regulations. The EEC strongly recommends to the Ministry to immediately review this unsatisfactory situation and make legislative changes to address it.

IMPROVEMENT

While the department is providing a high quality teaching environment for the students, it also has a continuous improvement programme that is based on the student evaluations and the discussions regularly (albeit informally) held with health services stakeholders. There are strategic plans for developing further their e-learning platform and e-tutorials, for continuous development of staff members and for addressing identified issues appropriately. Some of the improvements cannot be materialized without the legislative and economic support by the Ministry of Education.

The collaborative Master-equivalent postgraduate programmes run for the past 7 years have successful outcomes, as demonstrated by the EEC's review of dissertation samples, discussion with students and review of the curriculum. The EEC is confident that the department is in a position to establish and lead their own postgraduate programmes, whilst maintaining synergy and collaboration with others.

C. Research

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

APPROACH

- What is the Department's policy and main objective in research?
- Has the Department set internal standards for assessing research?

The Department's research philosophy is based on current legislation determining the nurse's professional rights and responsibilities which states that nurses should identify and promote research issues relevant to nursing. According to their internal evaluation documents (including staff CVs), a large number of staff hold PhDs and are involved in research and scholarly activities. Thirteen themes of research have been identified by the Department, covering a wide range of nursing domains. This is a significant number of research themes suggesting no clear research focus.

There is no concrete research strategy in place. The Department's intention is to reinforce research through external funding from various sources, the creation of research laboratories, the establishment of independent (i.e. run and managed by the Department) postgraduate and doctoral programmes. However, the evidence gathered by the EEC strongly suggests that the opportunities for research development is hampered – directly or indirectly - by the current Greek Higher Education regulatory framework that prevents TEI from running autonomously postgraduate and PhD programmes. It is clear that while equity of academic status between TEI and AEI has been established by legislation several years ago, this currently is not happening in reality, something which disadvantages the TEI. The EEC has observed that there is a lot of potential and opportunity for research development which should be exploited through collaborative efforts between the various Higher Education institutions.

Furthermore, a number of scholarly activities is taking place particularly through the two peer-reviewed journals edited and published within the department, and there is staff support for attending and presenting at scientific conferences.

The EEC has not become aware of any formal set of standards for assessing the Department's research outputs although throughout our discussions the staff were fully aware of internationally recognised quality indicators (e.g. impact factor, quality of journal, etc) and the need of incorporating these in the assessment of their research output.

IMPLEMENTATION AND RESULTS

- How does the Department promote and support research?

As previously mentioned, the Department promotes and supports research through supervising and teaching research in the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, staff research development, a variety of research activities through individual and collective efforts.

- Quality and adequacy of research infrastructure and support.

- Scientific publications.

Between 2009-2010 the number of publications exceeded 70 articles in peer-reviewed journals. This is considered adequate in the Department's early stage of development as well as the staff's heavy teaching commitments and workload. The EEC notes that a large number of publications are in the two departmental journals. The EEC understands that the Department increasingly encourages staff to publish in other international nursing journals. There are examples of high quality publications in prestigious journals, albeit few. Generally, while the quantity of publications is adequate, the quality is not comparable to other institutions abroad, and this is an area that needs careful planning and attention in the department.

- Research projects

Most research projects are linked to postgraduate programmes and are conducted in close collaboration with staff members who encourage the students to publish their work. Externally funded research is minimal but the EEC recognises the wider funding constraints and staff time limitations to put forward grant proposals. Unfunded research projects are commonly conducted by some of the staff members.

- Research collaborations.

While collaborations within the Department are common and successful, there is limited evidence of a more inter- and multi-disciplinary research.

IMPROVEMENT

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

The Department has developed a plan with short-, medium- and long-term goals. In relation to research, the goal is to increase the amount of research funding; set up well equipped research labs, increase the contribution of academic staff in research across the Department, set up PhD programmes and independent postgraduate programmes and set up a Research Committee. The Department has also set up a Journal Club for students, which is valued and well-received by the students. The sensitisation of students about research methodologies from as early as possible in the curriculum through to postgraduate level education is an advantage of the Department's research education strategy. The postgraduate programmes are a significant asset in sustaining the Department's research environment and outputs.

The EEC is of the view that the Department has the potential to introduce a doctoral level programme in the medium term after a transition period within which a number of criteria need to be met by staff, such as successful supervision of a thesis to completion as supervisors within a three-member supervisory committee ('trimelis epitropi'), completion of a training programme for supervisors, demonstrably high quality publications in international journals with impact factors and leading externally funded research projects, thus creating a strong research ethos and background. The EEC would like to note that the Department is beginning to take steps in this direction. The link between research and practice is necessary and would encourage continuous education and cultural change and would enhance the department's research ethos.

D. All Other Services

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

APPROACH

According to evidence provided by the internal evaluation and our own observations and discussions with staff and students it was revealed that the teaching and office spaces are entirely inadequate for the size of the student and staff bodies. Dedicated large meeting rooms to accommodate the needs of the Department are lacking. Equally the EEC found the lab space and the availability of these spaces for students to practice are also inadequate. Accessibility in terms of hours of operation and diversity and currency of books in the library facilities in the main campus are adequate, but in the ESPA site these are extremely limited. The underlying reason for these inadequacies is the lack of specific budget for renovation and update of these facilities. Some student administrative procedures (ie. enrollment, entering grades, etc) have been automated and the staff expect to continue to improve these. EEC views this as a very positive development and encourages TEI to continue and expand in this regard. The EEC was pleased to see that psychosocial support and medical facilities as well as provision of food at reasonable cost are available for students and staff. However, it appears that there is less pronounced awareness of student needs from minority ethnic and other marginalized communities.

IMPLEMENTATION

Administrative support is inadequate as this is provided by a very small number of approximately 6 individuals who serve more than 1800 students and staff. Some aspects of the infrastructure, e.g. free internet access and PCs, are necessary and need to be attended to enable and enhance student learning. Availability and issues relating to other facilities are already discussed earlier.

RESULTS

- Are administrative and other services adequate and functional?

The consensus of students and staff is that the newly computerized student administration system has considerably improved the function of the Department. Based on our site visit and discussions, the student welfare services appear to be satisfactory. The EEC believes that there is room for improvement of services of marginalized and special needs groups. The Department views the available services, although limited, as being used at full capacity.

IMPROVEMENTS

- Has the Department identified ways and methods to improve the services provided?

The Department has started to put considerable effort to improve the existing services within the realm of their 'abilities' despite budgetary restrictions and other limitations.

Collaboration with social, cultural and production organizations

The EEC was made aware by members of the academic staff, of a number of collaborations in social and cultural projects such as health promotion events, student volunteering activities over the summer break in rural health centres, contribution to the efforts of the Municipality of Athens to raise awareness relating to HIV/AIDS, and immunisation programmes in Roma communities, etc.

Although we cannot comment on the quality and originality of these community projects, we found these to be important activities linking the Department with the local community. The EEC wishes to congratulate the academic staff and students of the Department for their commitment to these projects which they carry out with great enthusiasm and sense of social responsibility.

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.

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

The rigid rules governing TEI education are inhibiting factors at the state level. As mentioned previously, the current practice of permitting students to extend their study time creates significant organisational and resource problems for the Department. A number of other rigid regulations further constrain innovation and development in the department.

- Short-, medium- and long-term goals.

The Department has identified in the internal evaluation report short, medium and long term goals which in summary include:

Short term goals:

- Continuous evaluation of paedagogical targets
- Strengthening student support
- Increasing the attendance rate of the theoretical subjects
- Increasing the research funding income
- Developing a research lab
- Increasing the number of research active staff
- Modernising the physical learning environment and lab equipment
- Developing further e-learning opportunities

Medium term goals:

- Establishing a doctoral programme
- Formalising clinical practice of students in hospitals
- Establishing autonomous postgraduate programmes

- Conducting regular curriculum review
- Enhancing the research office facilities

Long term goals generally involve issues around resources, institutional and state support measures.

As previously stated in other sections of this report, some actions have been taken to address some of the short term goals. The EEC did not identify a written and detailed Departmental strategic plan.

F. Final Conclusions and recommendations of the EEC

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

CONCLUSIONS

Overall, the EEC was impressed with the high quality theoretical and clinical teaching offered, the motivation and commitment of the peoplepower and the innovative practices that have started being incorporated in the curriculum. Before putting forward specific conclusions and recommendations, the EEC would like to make a clear statement that the departments of Nursing A & B at the TEI of Athens deliver University level nursing education and this should be unequivocally recognized by all relevant stakeholders, including the Ministry of Education.

As a general comment, the EEC strongly supports one-level nursing education at Universities only, which is currently the level of education offered in nursing in the majority of the developed world; in countries where a technical education level still exists to date, this is rapidly declining with a move to university education, in recognition of the scientific education needed for preparing skilled and knowledgeable nurses.

The EEC found the Department to be impressive in terms of:

- a) The high quality academic staff, which is one of the greatest assets of the department;
- b) The outstanding student-teacher interactions;
- c) the commitment and dedication of staff to serve and help students beyond the call of duty;
- d) the recognition and appreciation of the students towards the efforts made by their teachers in spite of the limited resources and support in general;
- e) the steps and the progress made thus far to develop E-learning and enable students to access e-resources;
- f) the development of two significant journals and their plans to improve their quality;
- g) the collaborations, interactions and student exchanges with schools and individuals in other countries;
- h) securing clinical placements for their students in spite of the lack of formal arrangements;
- i) the awareness of the importance of research in the advancement of nursing as an evidence-based profession

The EEC identified several weaknesses and most of these have to do with lack of adequate state /institutional funding that, for example, influences the availability of current library resources, labs and electronic facilities and physical spaces. Another major weakness is in developing high quality research output relevant to nursing sciences.

The EEC is surprised to find out that the Ministry of Education regulations state that the student voting power is a high percentage. In the EEC's view, such high percentage is not common practice in the higher education institutions in the countries that the EEC's members are employed in. While student representation is extremely important and welcomed for a learning environment, student voting should be better balanced.

Crucially the EEC was surprised to realise that nursing curricula are delivered by two departments in the same TEI. The EEC understands the historic reasons for this situation but this duplication of administration and management is problematic. The EEC's view is that the existence of two departments of Nursing within the same institution is inappropriate, divisive, costly and organisationally ineffective.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Merge Department of Nursing A and B into one administrative and managerial structure.
- Increase the number of core academic and administrative staff.
- Significantly reduce student voting power.
- Funds from the Ministry of Education for new construction and for building renovation with safety and physical comfort, equipment (e.g. heating, air-conditioning, ramps for easy access by disabled individuals), to bring them up at least to universally minimal standards, as well as furnishing, teaching and lab material (such as overhead projectors and computerised facilities in each lab).
- Practical labs should be equipped with up to date nursing and medical equipment used in everyday nursing practice.
- Formalise processes for continuous staff development, including sabbaticals.
- The Department, given its young existence as a higher education unit, has made outstanding progress and is fully ready and able of further change and improvement. This, however, can only occur if the legal and funding limitations by the State/Ministry are overcome.
- To change the misperception held by TEI students and the public at large that TEI education is inferior to university education to reflect existing legislation. To do this it is imperative that the Department is facilitated to develop and lead autonomously Master level programmes as well as to offer a Doctorate (PhD) degree independently.
- Undergraduate student projects should be less focussed on invasive research (unless they are part of a larger well-established research programme) and students should be encouraged more to conduct critical literature reviews. The Department should also reconsider the length of the final year project reports, which in the EEC's view should not be more than 10,000 words (in line with other international undergraduate nursing programmes).
- Further enhance E-learning.
- Develop clear research strategic plans with specific deliverables.
- Improve the research output of the department with nursing-relevant and higher quality research publications. This should include education and research encompassing all research approaches and methodologies.
- Develop a clear strategic plan for student clinical education.
- Formalise existing clinical practice and placement arrangements between service providers and TEI through a joint Committee with explicit terms of reference.
- Make better use of existing and new collaborations with international institutions, focussing on joint research and scholarly activities.
- Review the undergraduate and postgraduate research methods teaching provision to

include all methodologies (e.g. quantitative, qualitative and mixed methods approaches).

- Review the curriculum to make it more balanced between nursing-specific topics and broader medical/health topics, and introduce more contemporary nursing content as core courses.
- Funding for clinical teachers to support students in practice must continue to be available, as this is one of the greatest aspects of the department's quality of nursing education.

The Members of the Committee

Name and Surname	Signature
1. _____	
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