



ΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ

HELLENIC REPUBLIC

Α.ΔΙ.Π.

Η.Ο.Α.

ΑΡΧΗ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ
ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ
ΣΤΗΝ ΑΝΩΤΑΤΗ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗ

HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE AND
ACCREDITATION AGENCY

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

DEPARTMENT OF NURSING

TEI OF EPIRUS (TEIEP)

Nov 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 Department Midwifery of the High Technological Institution 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. **Dr Vasilios Raftopoulos (Coordinator)**

Associate Professor of Nursing

Cyprus University of Technology, Nursing Department, Cyprus

2. **Dr Andreas Pavlakis**

Assistant Professor

Open University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus

3. **Dr Nicos Middleton**

Assistant Professor in Health Research Methodology and Biostatistics,

Cyprus University of Technology, Nursing Department, Cyprus

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

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) welcomes the opportunity to participate in this evaluation instigated by the Ministry of Education of the Government of Greece. The EEC was warmly welcomed by the members of the Department of Nursing at TEI of Epirus (TEIEP), who truly made an impressive effort to facilitate the efficient functioning of the evaluation process of the EEC, especially since the first two days of the Committee’s stay at Ioannina a student demonstration (κατάληψη), unrelated to the evaluation process, restricted the use of the facilities in the main quarters of the Department. This was effectively remedied by the Department; all meetings and procedures proceeded uninterrupted in a different location (at the Technological Park). By the third day the demonstration ended which also permitted a visit to the Department’s and School’s facilities.

The TEIEP Nursing Department contributed whole-heartedly to the evaluation process with professionalism, honesty and great enthusiasm and the EEC thanks them for their positive attitude and for their dedicated collaboration. The EEC felt well equipped to address the tasks assigned by the H.Q.Q.A. and was able to complete the review effectively and efficiently. The conclusions described below were reached unanimously.

Description of the Nursing Department of TEI of Epirus

The TEIEP Department of Nursing is comprised of 2 Professors, 3 Associate Professors, 1 Assistant Professor, 3 Special teaching staff (ETEII) and 3 permanent clinical mentors (εργαστηριακοί συνεργάτες ΙΔΑΧ). Of the elected academic staff, one is a nurse and one is a nurse/psychologist, while the rest are medical doctors. The bachelor’s program at TEIEP Nursing Department is based on 7 semesters of theoretical, clinical training and simulation laboratories and 1 final semester when the students complete their clinical placement and carry out their final dissertation. The most recent academic year, 2013-2014, around 100 students enrolled in the Department’s undergraduate program; an intake which is reduced from approximately 300 students the previous academic years. A graduate of the TEIEP Department of Nursing programme is eligible to apply to the Hellenic Nursing Association for accreditation in order to be able to practice as a licensed nurse in clinical, community and other healthcare settings.

In addition to the undergraduate program of studies, the Department has been collaborating since 2003 with the Faculty of Medicine of the University of Ioanina to offer a

multiprofessional postgraduate program of studies entitled “Pathological Nursing” (with three different specialty tracts). After completion of this graduate qualification, graduates of the programme are equipped to conduct further research and are eligible to apply for doctoral studies. Furthermore, one of the faculty members participate in the Master’s program “Pain management” of the Medical School of the University of Ioannina and a further two members participate in the Master’s program “Primary Care” of the Medical School of the Thessaly University while two members participate in the Master's program "Mental Health" of T.E.I. of Thessaly. A number of faculty members also participate as members of PhD advisor committees in collaboration with Universities in Greece (Ioannina and Larissa) or abroad (UK, Spain). An evaluation of the postgraduate programs of studies is not within the remit of the current evaluation but the EEC feels that it is imperative to also mention these important activities. Lastly, the Faculty has informed the EEC about the upcoming lifelong multiprofessional training program PEGA.

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) has visited:

1. the Technological Park and
2. the University Hospital of Ioannina

As also mentioned above, due to the demonstration (κατάληψη) of the students in the main campus, the first two days of the visit proceedings took place in the Technological Park, which the Department occasionally uses for events, meetings and seminars. The third day the EEC has visited the main campus of TEIEP School of Health Sciences where all the facilities of the Department are located under the same roof, including:

3. the library of TEIEP School of Health Sciences
4. the Secretariat of TEIEP Nursing Department
5. the Amphitheatre
6. the classrooms
7. the laboratories
8. the laboratories of nursing skills development
9. the cafeteria and restaurant of the TEIEP School of Health Sciences
10. the Gym/athletic facilities.

The External Evaluation Committee has met with:

- 1) the Rector and the Vice-Rectors of TEIEP
- 2) the Dean of the School of Health Sciences of TEIEP
- 3) the Academic staff of the TEIEP Nursing Department (the internal evaluation group, the elected academic staff and some scientific collaborators)
- 4) the secretarial staff, librarian and other administrative staff of the TEIEP Nursing Department/School of Health Sciences
- 5) the Chair of the School of Medicine of the University of Ioannina who is also the deputy director of the University Hospital

- 6) the Director of the postgraduate program
- 7) the representative of MODIP of the TEIEP (ΜΟΔΥΠ)
- 8) a group of postgraduate students from TEIEP Nursing Department (n=5)
- 9) a group of clinical tutors in the Ioanina University Hospital and Hatzicosta Hospital (n=22)
- 10) a group of undergraduate students at the Ioannina University Hospital (clinical placement, n= 6)
- 11) a group of undergraduate students (n=25)
- 12) a group of graduates of the TEIEP Nursing Department
- 13) the Supervisor of Nurses in the Ioannina University Hospital
- 14) a group of Erasmus students (n=2)
- 15) members from the civil society (Municipality, District)
- 16) the nurse responsible for the continuous education of the nursing staff in the Ioanina University Hospital
- 17) the academic staff responsible for the Erasmus Program at the TEIEP Nursing Department
- 18) the Head of the Career Counseling Office (Γραφείο Διασύνδεσης)
- 19) the Head of the IT of the School of Health Sciences of TEIEP and
- 20) the Officer responsible of the Electronic Platform for the Clinical Placement.

The reports and the documents provided by the TEIEP Department that had been reviewed by the EEC were the following:

1. The internal evaluation reports (IER) of the Nursing Department (2010-2011 and 2012-2013)
2. The internal students' satisfaction survey
3. A sample of project work and dissertations of undergraduate students
4. The curriculum of the undergraduate studies
5. The demonstration of e-class (Moodle) and e-clinical placement
6. The Dissertation handbook of the undergraduate students (leaflet).

The site visit was very well organized and highly professional. The facilities visited by the External Evaluation Committee are mentioned above. Faculty members were very friendly and they facilitated the external evaluation committee's work by establishing a constructive dialogue and providing all the information and data requested. During interviews, faculty members responded to the EEC's questions with clarity and honesty. The EEC members would like to express their gratitude for the warm reception and kind collaboration.

The faculty members were very receptive to the feedback of the ECC in relation to improving their program of studies and incorporating the suggestions in the future plans for the Department. In conclusion, the attitude and behaviour of the staff (both academic and administrative) was professional, respectful and genuine, making EEC feel that their demanding job and time invested in the external evaluation was valuable. The department

should be congratulated for its eagerness to fully participate in the process of the external evaluation by offering unrestricted access to people, locations and documents as well as making all necessary arrangements to ensure that process ran uninterrupted at the same time a demonstration by the students was taking place.

All the documentation provided by the TEIEP Nursing Department was relevant. The documentation was informative, of high quality and up to date. The EEC recognizes that a great effort was put into the process to meet the objective of the IER of the Department.

A. Curriculum

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

APPROACH

Undergraduate curriculum

The goals of the current undergraduate Curriculum, as outlined in the IER of the TEIEP Nursing Department are the following (quote):

1. To demonstrate a broad and integrated understanding of the scope, main areas and boundaries of nursing.
2. To develop skills in clinical decision making, care delivery and evaluation underpinned by an appreciation of the centrality of evidence based practice and research.
3. To apply reflective and analytical skills in examining professional issues in relation to the role of the nurse in person centered health care
4. To engage in interdisciplinary health and social care working, which reflects user/carer imperatives
5. To enable student to possess professional attributes, adhere to the ethical standards set by the profession.
6. To extend their capacity to be effective life-long learners able to respond to changes in health care and society in order to fulfill their responsibilities for ensuring safe and effective professional practice.
7. To attain the required level of professional proficiency to meet standards set by Greek Ministry of Health and the Greek Nursing Regulatory Body for entry to the professional Nursing register.

The Faculty has a curriculum committee which reviews and revises the curriculum, according to the current global trends and the EU directives for nursing education. The most recent revision of the curriculum took place in 2010. Recommendations of the committee are reviewed and approved by the Department ('sinelefsi') in which students are represented. Input and suggestions from main stakeholders and other parties involved in the educational activities of the Department, including the clinical staff and the senior management of the local health care settings, are taken into consideration. The revision of the curriculum is the responsibility of the appropriate committee. The input from the civil society and the other stakeholders is welcomed from the EEC.

The objectives of the programme are clearly stated in the IER of the TEIEP Nursing

Department. The EEC agrees that these:

1. are adequate for a Bachelor degree in nursing
2. prepare students to become professional nurses and to provide services to various settings
3. need to be more nurse-oriented (an area which be urgently further improved).

Although the last revision of the curriculum was in the right direction and has achieved the goal to make the programme of studies more nurse-centred, the EEC encourages the Department to continue their efforts in that direction in order to make the curriculum even more nurse-centred. Towards that goal, there is an urgent need to increase the number of nursing qualified permanent academic staff in order to meet the objectives of the curriculum.

While overall the program is appropriate, especially after its most recent revision, the EEC has identified a few areas in the curriculum that may require further improvement. For example, there seems to be alack of a clearly documented strategy in order to identify areas of subject overlap. In addition according to the 77/452/EU some subjects should either be included in the curriculum or, if currently component part of other subjects they need to be strengthened (e.g. nursing theories, infections surveillance and control, teaching methods for nurses, quantitative research methods/biostatistics and basic epidemiology-the latter could replace the more specialised “Environmental Hygiene’ module currently in the curriculum). Furthermore, the EEC is of the view that the modules of ‘Principles of Nursing Management’ and ‘Management of Healthcare Services’ should not be electives but at least one of the management-related courses should be compulsory.

According to the documents supplied and based on the discussions with the Faculty during the field visit, the ratio of theory/practice is currently 50:50 which is in line with the 77/452/EU Directive. In the near future, the Department should review the program to meet the prerequisites of the updated version of the European Directive (expressed in total hours of nursing education).

In general the curriculum meets the criteria of the European Directive for the nursing education. The adoption of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) makes it flexible, by resulting in the international academic and vocational recognition of the qualifications awarded by the TEIEP Nursing Department. The EEC is of the view that the estimation of the ECTS and the course outlines for each module should be revised in order to ensure that the ECTS accurately reflect the actual student work load as portrayed by the course outlines.

IMPLEMENTATION

The TEIEP Nursing Department’s goals are implemented appropriately by the curriculum in accordance with the international nursing standards. The curriculum is clearly articulated and its structure is functional, combining well nursing theory with nursing practice. As already mentioned above, the EEC welcomes the efforts to achieve the nursing-centred focus in the curriculum and encourages the Faculty to continue towards that direction. It is exceptional that the Department recognises the importance of qualitative research methods. The EEC welcomes

the fact that qualitative research methods receive a major emphasis in the curriculum but believes that this should not be in the expense of quantitative research methods which should be given equal emphasis either by incorporating a quantitative research methods and biostatistics module or strengthening the existing research methodology module.

The EEC believes that in some cases resources are not adequate. The small number of Faculty members of the TEIEP Nursing Department (i.e. 4 elected members with a medical background and 2 elected members with a nursing background), combined with the need to employ 50 external clinical collaborators at any given time who are not directly involved in the organization and management of the program, heavily impacts on the delivery and quality of the program. However, the EEC would like to recognize that the commitment, time and efforts of the academic staff go well beyond the call of duty and to some extent this compensates for the above shortcomings.

All staff (elected, external collaborators and clinical instructors) is qualified to implement the curriculum effectively. The EEC has been nicely surprised by the fact that the vast majority of the clinical collaborators hold a master degree and some of them a PhD or are currently PhD candidates. This indicates their commitment to the advancement of nursing education and practice both within and beyond the Department.

RESULTS

The EEC's observation that the current undergraduate curriculum is appropriate in achieving the department's goals and objectives was also verified by the students who expressed how much they are enjoying the course and how much they are learning despite shortcomings in the resources (e.g. number of clinical mentors, space in the library, adequacy of the classrooms for team building and group discussions). The EEC notes that there is currently no specific follow-up process for TEIEP Nursing Department graduates' career development and employment status. However, the Department has recently made some efforts to rectify this situation through the career guidance officer. The EEC would like to congratulate the officer and the Department for this effort.

IMPROVEMENT

As mentioned above, the current curriculum is relatively new (last revision on 2010) and it is a product of internal evaluations and consultations with academic staff and students. During the meetings with the Nursing Department, the Faculty members have identified several aspects in the curriculum that need further improvement. This is also stated in the IER. The Department has further plans to strengthen the evidence-based approach in the majority of the modules.

B. Teaching

APPROACH

As also stated in the IER, there is a pedagogic policy with regards to teaching approach in the TEIEP Nursing Department (constructivist model). This was also evident from the Department's formal and informal curricula activities and the discussions the EEC had with faculty members, nurses in clinical placements and the students. The results of these policies culminate in the production of skillful graduates who are appropriately and adequately prepared for nursing practice.

The curriculum is delivered using various methods of teaching, including lectures, discussions, and interactive skills workshops. This variety in teaching methods covers learning objectives in all domains (cognitive, psychomotor and affective). As of recently, the Department has also started using e-learning methods and several courses already provide an extensive e-class support. Although class attendance is not compulsory (due to the legislation), according to the Faculty's accounts, student attendance of the theoretical modules lectures is satisfactory. The EEC welcomes the use of critical assignments, critical case reviews and reflective activities and teaching methods that enable reflective, instead of exclusively relying on written memory exams as determined by the Ministry of Education (i.e. at the end of the semester).

According to the IER the Lecture/Student ratio for the theoretical subjects are 1:100. In order to achieve this ratio we are required to provide multiple classes for the same subject. This number fluctuates significantly depending on how many external collaborators are employed each year. It is of note that there was a compulsory reduction in external staff in 2013 by the Ministry of Education. The ratio of faculty members to external collaborators is 6:50. The simulation laboratory subjects the Lab Lecturer/Student ratio is 1:25-30, which is a much more viable ratio.

In terms of clinical placements, the EEC observed that in some cases these are oversubscribed with students. This issue needs appropriate attention since it was something that was also brought up during the discussions the EEC had with the students. The ratio of students/clinical mentors is considered to be quite high. The situation in the current semester is particularly challenging, as a result of the delay in finalizing the contracts with the clinical collaborators, but otherwise is not characteristic of usual practices.

The EEC's observations and discussions with staff and students in clinical practice settings indicated that the clinical mentors are an excellent resource linking academic work and clinical practice. Students confirmed that the faculty staff/clinical mentors are very supportive in their learning. The EEC was taken aback by the passion of the students for their studies. It was evident that staff-students relationships are excellent, promoting a professional and effective learning environment.

In contrast to the human capacity, the EEC believes that there is room for improvement with regards to the built infrastructure. For example, office accommodation is basic but

adequate. The Faculty share office space. There are some undersized classrooms with inflexible seating arrangements which do not enable small group discussion work. Furthermore, there is no access for disabled individuals. Furthermore, there is an urgent need for elevators in the building, something that the Faculty members have also noted as it makes shifting heavy material and equipment from one floor to the other very difficult. The EEC was informed by the Faculty that no modifications are permitted before property titles are issued.

As stated earlier, there is an electronic/digital platform for learning and study skills support. Students need to be able to have reliable regular access to the World Wide Web, to enhance their information literacy skills and extend their learning through important resources. The e-class support needs to be further expanded. Currently the students use their personal emails since the scarcity of IT personnel prohibits the issuing of TEIEP email accounts and VPN access. The number of computers in the library is insufficient considering the number of students.

IMPLEMENTATION

Student evaluations were submitted to the EEC as part of the IER. These indicate that students are generally very satisfied with their learning and teaching processes. The EEC visited the TEIEP School of Health Sciences library and found the resources to be adequate although there is space for improvement (e.g. more reading space, more computers). The EEC also reviewed textbooks and teaching materials used in courses and found these to be relevant and appropriate. The Library provides access to a large number of electronic nursing journals; these need to be enhanced.

The TEIEP Nursing Department applies research findings to teaching and practice and affirms the importance of this link to effective nursing care. Students make an effort to apply these linkages in their daily practice in an effective way. However in the dissertation samples that EEC has reviewed as part of the evaluation process, this is not always evident.

The EEC recognises that the TEIEP Nursing Department has an impressive external profile. It appears that the Department values student and staff mobility and takes part in European exchange programmes such as ERASMUS, which provide important learning and development opportunities for both staff and students. Students are actively encouraged to participate in such activities, and in recent years, students from TEIEP (n=35) have visited a number of countries through the Erasmus programme. The Countries of option were Finland, Denmark, Cyprus, Spain, Romania and Ireland. Similarly, the Department has hosted 22 Erasmus students. The Department offers an introductory module in English and makes sure that Clinical Instructors/Mentors are able to adequately support foreign students in English, hence attracting greater number of students from outside Greece. Also, the Department is part of European Florence Network. In the Florence Network there are 38 Nursing Departments from 18 different European countries. Additionally, the Department is part of European Academy of Caring Sciences. During the visit, the EEC has the opportunity to meet two Erasmus students

from the Netherlands, who reported positive experiences.

The academic teaching is evaluated (in an electronic format) by the students every year through the use of a structured questionnaire developed by the TEIEP (following the rules from ADIP). The questionnaires are statistically analyzed and the results are tabulated; a sample of results from the student evaluations was included in the IER. Results suggest that students are overall satisfied with the teaching, course content and study materials although, according to the student responses, there seems to be room for improvement regarding the necessity of tutorials (φροντιστήρια) and with regards the timely delivery of books by EVDOXUS. Students also report the need for more midterm assignments.

RESULTS

The EEC concluded that the TEIEP Nursing Department academic staff and clinical mentors are very effective teachers of nursing theory and practice. This was documented statistically in the IER, and was emphatically confirmed by the nursing students. The EEC has no clear picture with regards to success/failure percentages.

The Department has presented some information regarding the length of time to graduation but the data were not based on enrolment cohorts (they were rather the number of students graduating in 2012-2013 by the length of time to graduation), thus not allowing an estimate of the percentage of students who graduate in four years.

For instance, in 2012-2013 there were about 90 students who graduated after four years of studies. If there were as many as 300 enrolling students, this would translate to only a 30% success rate. Furthermore the EEC was not provided with any information about discrepancies in the success/failure percentages between modules. The EEC has noticed that the curve of students' grades is skewed (i.e. only 6% of the students in the last ten years graduated with overall grade lower than 6.9). The EEC has discussed these concerns with the TEIEP Nursing Department, who offered explanations and useful suggestions.

IMPROVEMENT

Recently, the TEIEP Nursing Department has developed an integrated electronic learning platform. They acknowledge the need to further advance e-learning and the learning support platform. This will provide students with greater flexibility in their learning and could improve student participation in theory learning.

Finally, the EEC would like to mention that the Faculty expressed their willingness and readiness to develop and implement a self-reliant Master's program after the evaluation process is completed. It is important to note that the TEIEP Department of Nursing along with the Medical School of the University of Ioannina have created and coordinated the first Master's in "Nursing Pathology". This Master's program commenced in 2003 and, since then, it has had a steady increase of students' intake (according to the Department). The

postgraduate program in Nursing Pathology has three specialities/tracks:

- Nursing care before, during and after endoscopic procedures
- Nursing care for hepatic patients
- Nursing care of people with communicable diseases.

Currently, the Department does not offer Doctoral level studies; however, Faculty members serve in doctoral supervisory committees (and in some case they lead these groups) at the University of Ioannina, University of Thessaly, Thames Valley University (UK) and University of Almeria (Spain). The EEC welcomes all these efforts that add value to the Department.

C. Research

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

APPROACH

The Faculty is actively trying to pursue research. Members have submitted several research proposals to national (mainly) and international calls (Archimedes II, Thales, Interreg, PEGA, etc) and some of them have been successful. One of the programs completed during the period 2000-2009 was entitled *“The effects of the relationship between carer and patient in the development of psychosomatic complications”*. This was funded by the European programme Archimedes I and it was conducted in cooperation with the Psychiatric clinic of the University of Ioannina.

Despite a number of scientific publications being produced on a yearly basis, the Department’s research activity seems to be highly individualized and externally-led. The majority of manuscripts are published in Greek-based scientific journals which are not necessarily indexed in international databases and may not have an impact factor. Nevertheless, the Faculty participates in many national and international scientific conferences and encourages the participation of the students. According to the IER, students actively participate in the research process by performing data collection as part of on-going research projects within the Department. Furthermore, the undergraduate dissertation theses include a research component since they are primarily systematic reviews (of either quantitative or qualitative studies). Also, postgraduate dissertations are primarily research-based (these are rarely systematic reviews). With such large number of under- and post- graduate dissertations, the EEC would expect at least some to be published in international scientific journals.

The Nursing Department does not currently have a written research policy but it recognizes the need to develop one. The Faculty has stated that they are in the process of establishing an overall research strategy. The EEC did not document any internal standards, described through collective agreement/action for assessing either the quality of research projects or their alignment with nursing and other disciplines.

IMPLEMENTATION

The TEIEP Nursing Department promotes and supports research among students through

offering a research methods module, which covers both quantitative and qualitative research methods, even though it leans more towards qualitative research. Staff members encourage undergraduate students to present their work in scientific conferences. Students are also required to complete a dissertation during their final semester.

Overall there is a limited infrastructure and support for research. Generally, while the quantity of publications is adequate, the quality and impact is not comparable to other institutions abroad (with some notable exceptions). This is an area that needs careful future planning and attention in the department. Similarly, the publication rate in books and conference proceedings is adequate, but quality should prevail over quantity. Staff needs to be more actively involved in nursing-relevant research and increase their publication output in competitive international journals.

The Department participates actively in several research calls (mainly national), although there is a need for the Department to further expand its network of collaborators as well as develop an overall research strategy that will guide, direct and facilitate the successful participation to these activities. Of course, the Department has already built a network with several Organizations and other Universities or TEI Departments, which is a prerequisite for joint research. A more focused research strategy will help in order to delegate roles to each partner in future research calls. The EEC acknowledges that the Faculty staff does not have an established supporting infrastructure for withdrawing artificial bureaucratic hindrances and successfully attracting funding. Furthermore, there are no incentives for those who submit research proposals or participate in research; for example, a reduced teaching load for Faculty members involved in research projects.

RESULTS

Most research projects are individualized or based on staff's connection with other academic organizations. There is limited evidence of research leadership in external research collaborations. The members of the Faculty regularly attend scientific national and international congresses and workshops. They also encourage under- and postgraduate students to present their work in scientific congresses. Externally funded research is minimal but the EEC recognises the wider funding constraints and staff/time limitations.

Collaborations within the Department are not uncommon. The overall positive outward profile of the Nursing Department, while commendable, needs to extend beyond conferences and study days, and strategically develop more external and active research alliances and multi-disciplinary collaborations and seek more research funding.

No external awards were noted for distinctions in nursing-related research.

IMPROVEMENT

Both the EEC and the Department recognize the urgent need to develop a strategic research plan with short-, medium- and long-term goals. Desired outcomes include external research

funding, the setting up of well-equipped research labs, and wider involvement of all academic staff across the Department in research, setting up PhD programmes and independent postgraduate programmes and establishing a Departmental Research and Ethics Committee. The familiarization of students with research methodology from as early as possible in the curriculum through to postgraduate level education should be a priority of the Department's research education strategy. The postgraduate program (and related activities) is a significant asset for the promotion and maintenance of research activity within the Department and should be further encouraged.

D. All Other Services

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

APPROACH

The TEIEP Nursing Department uses all the available institutional resources in an effective and efficient way. According to the IER, the EEC's observations and the comments of the students and the academic staff, the facilities of TEIEP Nursing Department (e.g. offices, classrooms, and laboratories, meeting rooms) are adequate. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the elected academic staff as well as the external collaborators and instructors lack private office space, which does not easily facilitate meetings and office contact hours with the students. A particularly nice feature is that all facilities (library, gym, classroom, amphitheatre, secretary, staff offices) are located under the same roof. The EEC did not see any reading room in the area of the Nursing Department (other than the space in the library) or a counselling/debriefing space for the students although there is an excellent aula for group activities of the students.

Recently, many of the administrative procedures have been simplified and now largely involve electronic processing. The ECC has met with the Secretariat of the Department who provided all the necessary information. The ECC particularly welcomes this achievement.

Attendance at clinical placements has been reported to be exemplary. The staff of the TEIEP Nursing Department recognizes that student attendance at theory classes varies. The EEC has discussed that issue with a group of students and found that their attendance of the theory classes depends on the attractiveness of the subject. The Faculty makes effort to increase the attractiveness of the theory classes. The ECC welcomes that effort.

IMPLEMENTATION

The Secretariat of the TEIEP Nursing Department is staffed by 2 persons who have to provide administrative services to 6 faculty members, 40 clinical instructors and up to 1,200 active students. The Secretariat is making a great effort to cover the needs of all the members of the Nursing Department. Nevertheless, and according to their comments, the introduction of the e-secretary information system has simplified the procedures substantially.

PC labs, library, athletic facilities of the Nursing Department are adequate although there is room for improvement (e.g. more PCs, more reading space in the library). Dining facilities are excellent. The Department believes that the infrastructure has been improved drastically over the last years. While the library facilities are certainly adequate, the EEC believes that there is a need to enrich the catalog with more nursing journals, books and other educational electronic material. Student access to the library, PCs and free internet access is considered to be satisfactory. The ECC welcomes the use of Wi-Fi technology for the free access of the students to the Internet in the area of the Department. The staff of the library is exemplary and very supportive to the students and academic staff.

IMPROVEMENTS

The work of the administrative staff is vital for the effective functioning of the Nursing Department. Overall the EEC is impressed with the professionalism and the “customer friendly” attitude of the Secretariat of the Nursing Department. The administrative staff is self-motivated and is making efforts to improve all the processes under the financial and law restrictions. Based on both the faculty’s and students’ comments the administrative and other services are adequate and functional.

Collaboration with social, cultural and production organizations

The Nursing Department has successfully developed an extensive network with social, cultural and scientific organizations; for example, the Medical Association of Ioannina, Organization for Family Members of Psychiatric Patients, Organization of Patients with idiopathic inflammatory disease of the colon, Prefecture of Ioannina, Schools of Ioannina, Cancer Association of Patras etc. According to the IER such forms of cooperation are being developed in the context of the students’ Practical Placement and volunteerism (e.g. twice a year nursing students participate to blood donor activities, open to the public seminars, and other charity fund raising activities). In addition, some of the Faculty participate in BLS training.

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

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

The EEC concludes that the rigid rules governing TEI education in Greece in combination with decreased budget limit productivity, and sustainability. A number of other rigid regulations further constrain creativity innovation and development in the department as outlined in the following:

At State level:

- Absence of self-reliant postgraduate and doctoral programmes in Nursing in TEIEP Nursing Department which should be nursing centered and nursing orientated
- Very small numbers of permanent faculty nursing departmental staff
- Excessive number of visiting staff in relation to the permanent staff
- Lack of research infrastructure and protected time for conducting nursing research
- Lack of external research funding (with some exemptions)
- Constantly changing legislature (attendance, assessment system)
- A high teaching workload (14 hours of teaching for the Assistant Professor and 12 for the Associate Professor is considered to be high).
- Non participation of the Department to the intake process of students in the Nursing programme
- Bureaucratic processes which are time-consuming in signing contracts with Faculty/staff
- Lack of funding for the purchasing of hardware and software material for both the library and the lecture rooms
- Lack of autonomous financing of the Department and transparency of the funding that is distributed to the Department for each student intake.

At Institutional and Departmental level:

- Inadequate number of IT/supporting staff
- Lack of structured Research strategic Plan and dedicated time for research
- Increased bureaucracy imposed by the institutional framework
- Administrative and secretarial tasks commonly carried out by the faculty members
- Insufficient number of technical and assistant staff to support the learning process and research activities as well as lack of infrastructure (research laboratories, clinical areas, auxiliary areas).

The TEIEP Nursing Department has already prepared a list of desired actions that would enhance the quality of the current program.

Short-term proposed actions include:

- Continuous assessment of the curriculum in order to further capitalise on the strengths while at the same time deal with any potential limitations
- The expansion and further development of international collaborations with even more European Universities as well as with Universities outside the European region
- Further development of the online synchronous and asynchronous teaching
- Continuing cultivation of research collaborations and team-work

- Organisation of conferences and scientific meetings in the Departments premises
- Student-centred teaching with the implementation of measurable student learning objectives
- The development of self-reliant masters programmes
- Further support of students to participate and present their work in conferences and meetings
- The provision of University email accounts to students
- Greater use of electronic transactions for administrative matters
- Nursing laboratories that will remain open on a 24 hour basis to enable students to practice
- The purchase of plagiarism software.

Medium-term proposed actions include:

- The review of the curriculum in order to make it more flexible
- More formal establishment of inter-departmental research collaborations
- The development of the curriculum in English in order to attract foreign students and also to adequately prepare Greek students who wish to follow an international career pathway
- Further promoting small-group teaching activities while in parallel limiting traditional large group lectures
- Increase of Faculty members with Nursing backgrounds
- Increase of hardcopy and electronic material in the library.

The EEC believes that increasing the number of faculty members, significantly enhancing the research profile of the department, involving staff with experience in supervising master's and doctoral students to completion and a stronger national and international departmental nursing profile are essential prerequisites for the 'transition' to University level studies.

The EEC considers that the library facilities are adequately established but there is a need to enrich the catalogue with nursing books and other educational electronic materials. Student access to the library, PCs and free internet access is considered to be satisfactory, although some improvements are warranted.

F. Final Conclusions and recommendations of the EEC

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

The EEC has been impressed with the excellent calibre and motivation of the TEIEP Nursing Department staff's performance, enthusiasm and commitment across teaching and learning, and openness to the civil society, other health professionals and stakeholders. Equally

the EEC was impressed with the passionate and dedicated nursing students who have demonstrated a real interest for the nursing science and acknowledged the teaching skills of the academic staff and their effort to promote nursing education.

In particular, the EEC would like to highlight the following positive aspects:

1. the enthusiasm and dedication of all staff to high quality education;
2. the commitment of the academic staff, which is one of the greatest assets of the department;
3. positive staff-student relationships based on trust, professionalism and respect, support and nurturance, cooperation, loyalty, enthusiasm and determination, despite the current financial economic climate;
4. the recognition and appreciation of the students towards the efforts made by their teachers in spite of the limited resources and support in general;
5. the outward external profile of the Nursing Department;
6. the efforts to maintain a high standard of clinical education at clinical placements
7. the successful collaboration with the Medical School towards a Master's program which commenced 10 years ago and as a result it has created a large "pool" of nurses with postgraduate (MSc) qualifications. These nurses provide nursing education in the Department as clinical or/and scientific collaborators. The EEC has been impressed by their professionalism and passion and would like to congratulate them for their dedication to the provision of high quality nursing education.

The EEC found a high level of consistency between the IER, the TEIEP Nursing Department discussions, the various visits and meetings with the stakeholders, as well as the meetings with the nursing students, over the time of the evaluation period.

The TEIEP Nursing Department's readiness and capability to change/improve demonstrates their resilience and veracity. The IER (as well as all presentations during the proceedings) has been an informative and detailed narrative of their functioning, quality improvement and aspirations. The TEIEP Nursing Department is working extremely hard to progress the discipline of nursing and influence nursing care provision in Greece.

We would like to thank the TEIEP Nursing Department for their contribution to this evaluation and wish them well in their future development.

Accordingly, having completed this review and given due consideration to the findings, the EEC recommends the following for the attention and action of the Ministry of Education.

Recommendations:

- 1. Recruitment of full-time faculty staff members with a nursing background.**
- 2. Budget constraints on staffing are addressed as a matter of urgency.**
 - 2.1 Academic staff and student teaching ratios must be set at safe quality teaching provision levels as a minimum of 1:20 and nursing academics (including external collaborators) must be employed to achieve this.
 - 2.2 In the current semester the number of full-time external collaborators is very low

(n=3). This situation needs to be resolved immediately so that the department can maintain its normal activities.

- 2.3 A workload model needs to be developed. Equal appreciation of research and teaching activity should be fundamental.
- 2.4 The number of IT staff must be increased by appropriately qualified and skilled persons.

3. Minor amendments in the Curriculum should be made to ensure the following suggestions are addressed;

- 3.1 Quantitative research methodology (as well as mixed method approaches) must should not be given lesser emphasis within the research methodology module;
- 3.2 Nursing theories is briefly taught in the Pathological Nursing module, this needs to be changed as nursing theories may need a more focused module;
- 3.3 Some subjects should be included in the curriculum (nursing theories, infections surveillance and control, teaching methods for nurses, oncology nursing, biostatistics, and epidemiology) either as separate modules or incorporated in existing modules. The EEC is of the view that at least one of the modules: Principles of Nursing Management and Management of Healthcare Services should not be elective but compulsory. Environmental hygiene could be part of a more general epidemiology module, which could also include occupational and public health.
- 3.4 The seminars module in the last semester needs to be enhanced and the aim and structure to be reconsidered; the final year dissertation should be a review (ideally systematic review) and more focused Guidelines for Dissertations' writing should be provided.
- 3.5 Although the Department has made a tremendous effort to incorporate evidence-based practice in their modules, this needs to be a consistent framework across all nursing modules (e.g. though projects, assignments, case studies etc).
- 3.6 For some modules, the course outlines are exceptionally detailed; this needs to be the case for all the rest. In addition to learning objectives, the course outlines should refer to the specific learning activities involved in order to allow a consistent estimation of the workload necessary to complete them (and thus, reflected more accurately in the ECTS credits).
- 3.7 Many of the students have expressed their wish to take part in research activities. The Department is urged to build a research infrastructure for the students through small scale research projects where the students can participate through field work. All the current research related student activities should be more formalized.
- 3.8 Based on the sample of dissertation that the EEC has reviewed, the work conducted by the students was not always nursing centred; this should be ameliorated.

4.The electronic/digital platform for learning and clinical placement is excellent and should be further promoted.

The Department has done an excellent job regarding the development of an electronic learning platform. Students have expressed their wish for formal training in the use of these electronic tools at the beginning of their studies or their clinical placement.

5.Develop a departmental research strategy and improve the quality of the research output.

All the Faculty members should pursue research and invest more in internal collaborations. The Nursing Department does not currently have a written research policy but it recognizes the need to develop one and they are in the process of establishing a research strategy. The Faculty should give a priority to publishing in scientific journal with high impact factors. The absence of a Research Ethics Committee within the Department is a major barrier.

6.Make better use of existing and new collaborations with national and international institutions, focussing on joint research and scholarly activities.

7.If external collaborators will continue to be a significant staffing part of the Department, their ongoing support and attention to their needs is of paramount importance.

The Members of the Committee

**TECHNOLOGICAL EDUCATIONAL
INSTITUTE OF EPIRUS
DEPARTMENT OF NURSING**

Name and Surname

Signature

Dr. Vassilis Raftopoulos

Assistant Professor, Cyprus University of Technology,
Lemesos, Cyprus

Dr. Nicos Middleton

Assistant Professor, Cyprus University of Technology, Lemesos, Cyprus

Dr. Andreas Pavlakis

Assistant Professor, Open University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus