



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ HELLENIC REPUBLIC

Α.ΔΙ.Π. Η.Ο.Α.

ΑΡΧΗ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE AND
ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ACCREDITATION AGENCY
ΣΤΗΝ ΑΝΩΤΑΤΗ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗ

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

Sound Technology and Musical Instruments
TEI of Ionian Islands

June 2014

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External Evaluation Committee

The Committee responsible for the External Evaluation of the Department of Sound Technology and Musical Instruments of the School of Music Technology of the Technical Institution of the Ionian Islands consisted of the following four (4) expert evaluators drawn from the Registry constituted by the HQAA in accordance with Law 3374/2005 :

1. Associate Professor George Tzanetakis (President)
(Title) (Name and Surname)

University of Victoria Canada
(Institution of origin)
2. Lecturer Alexandros Kontogeorgakopoulos
(Title) (Name and Surname)

Cardiff School of Art and Design / Cardiff Metropolitan University
(Institution of origin)
3. Associate Professor Vasilis Kallis
(Title) (Name and Surname)

University of Nicosia
(Institution of origin)
4. Dr. Gottfried Schubert
(Title) (Name and Surname)

Freelancer Consultant of Acoustics
(Institution of origin)

N.B. The structure of the "Template" proposed for the External Evaluation Report mirrors

the requirements of Law 3374/2005 and corresponds overall to the structure of the Internal Evaluation Report submitted by the Department.

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

Introduction

I. The External Evaluation Procedure

- Dates and brief account of the site visit.
- Whom did the Committee meet ?
- List of Reports, documents, other data examined by the Committee.
- Groups of teaching and administrative staff and students interviewed
- Facilities visited by the External Evaluation Committee.

The visit took place on Tuesday, 10 and Wednesday, 11 of June, 2014. The committee met with the top-level administration of the TEI of the Ionian Islands as well as the administration, regular and sessional faculty, students and administrative staff of the department. The committee examined the internal evaluation report, the curriculum, some of the textbooks, course notes, and lab assignments. We also looked at examples of undergraduate thesis report, class projects, as well as promotional/recruitment material and the department web-page. We met with all 4 of the regular faculty, and most of the sessional faculty, all of the administrative staff, and several students including the elected student representatives. We extended an open invitation to anyone who would like to meet with us and discuss. Finally we visited all the existing facilities used for both teaching and research in the department.

II. The Internal Evaluation Procedure

Please comment on:

- Appropriateness of sources and documentation used
- Quality and completeness of evidence reviewed and provided
- To what extent have the objectives of the internal evaluation process been met by the Department?

In our opinion the department followed the guidelines provided by the HQAA and supported their responses with information about all aspects of the department. The report is a good first attempt given that this is a new process for this department and many other higher education institutions in Greece. The evidence provided is mostly complete but there are definitely some areas of improvement for the writing of the internal evaluation report. During the site visit we became aware of some of the interesting activities and other aspects of the department that were not obvious from the internal evaluation report. On the good side the picture we formed after the site visit was better than the one we had initially based only on the internal report. It is also clear that all the faculty and administrative staff put effort into the internal evaluation process.

Areas of improvement for the internal evaluation report:

1. Probably the biggest weakness was the lack of any formal student evaluations of assessing teaching. The department mentioned that the process was started two years ago and there were logistical issues in processing the evaluation reports by the central TEI administration. Processing these evaluation reports should not take so long and both the department and the upper level TEI administration should take steps to ensure that it is conducted on a timely basis. It is critically important that formal teaching evaluation is conducted on a regular basis and statistics about it are collected, considered by the department and used to improve the teaching effectiveness of the faculty. It is also important that these statistics are included in their internal evaluation reports in the future.
2. The list of publications and research grants by the faculty appears to be complete however it could be more consistently formatted and organized. It should be kept regularly updated.
3. Many of the responses to the questions in the internal report only mentioned what was being done rather than commenting on strengths, weakness and areas of future improvement.
4. The department should also be more specific in their answers. For example instead of simply stating that the instructors incorporate research in their teaching they could give particular examples where that is the case.
5. The department has excellent research equipment and facilities something which is not clearly evident from the internal evaluation report.

To summarize we believe that the internal evaluation process has met the stated objectives and it provides an adequate picture of the department at this particular time but it can be improved for the future based on our feedback.

A. Curriculum

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

APPROACH

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

According to the internal evaluation report and study guide the goals of the curriculum is to develop the knowledge and skills of students in the areas of sound technology and musical instruments. The plan is to achieve these goals through the design of the curriculum and a combination of theoretical courses and associated applied laboratory instruction. How well this is achieved in actual practise will be discussed below.

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

In 2011 a committee consisting of the 4 permanent faculty members and 2 student representatives did a curriculum redesign to better align the program with the stated objectives. The following factors were taken into account:

1. Better identification of each course belonging to one of the two main paths of the curriculum (sound technology and musical instruments).
2. Challenges in the area of musical instruments including the difficulty of obtaining formally qualified teaching staff, the low number of students, level of study.
3. Critical assessment of the previous curriculum and improvement based on identified problems.

The new curriculum came into practice in 2011.

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

The curriculum is consistent with the objectives stated above. One of the unique aspects of the proposed curriculum is the path of musical instrument making an important activity for the society that is a differentiating factor for this particular department and other institutions in Greece.

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

The curriculum was decided by a committee created for this purpose. Two student representatives were included. Given that the majority of the courses are taught by sessional faculty we would have expected that they would have also been consulted. Additional stakeholders that could have been consulted in the future would be the administrative staff and representative of the employers of the practical training.

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

Based on the internal evaluation report there is no set procedure for the revision of the curriculum.

IMPLEMENTATION

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

The department's goal is implemented effectively by the curriculum and the design of it follows European recommendations such as the use of ECTS. The curriculum is not balanced between the two paths and puts more emphasis on the sound technology direction.

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

For the sound technology path we believe that the existing curriculum is acceptable and similar to other programs internationally. As positive aspects we note the inclusion of basic musicianship courses and associated training. The musical instrument path has to be enhanced.

- Is the structure of the curriculum rational and clearly articulated?

In general the structure of the curriculum is rational but needs to be rebalanced. The courses comprising the common core have to be more clearly articulated and rethought. For example more courses related to instrument making should be offered during the first two years of the program and removing courses that are not relevant to the musical instrument path.

- Is the curriculum coherent and functional?

Not enough (see above for details and below for specific recommendations).

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

Overall the material for each course is appropriate and the time offered is according to the standard practices of TEI institutions in Greece. Internationally the number of hours associated with each course as well as the total number of courses is heavy for a 4 year program. We have identified some deficiencies in specific courses and we provide recommendations for improvement below.

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

For the sound technology path the department has the necessary resources and qualified and trained staff to deliver the curriculum. For the musical instrument path the number of qualified and trained staff is not sufficient to deliver an effective program to better cover this area. The existing luthier staff member is doing an excellent job but is only able to cover his speciality.

RESULTS

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

- If not, why is it so? How is this problem dealt with?
- Does the Department understand why and how it achieved or failed to achieve these results?

There is no formal process for following up the placement and career paths after their graduation and this is a priority the department should set. However, the department reports in relevant short-scale reports that they have undertaken on and off over the last few years that there is a sense of appreciation of the degree by the marketplace. The department should pursue further quantification of the effectiveness of the curriculum by closely monitoring graduate initial placement and career progression through an ongoing formal process.

From discussion with students it seems that the majority of them considers the new curriculum of 2011 better than the old one especially the revitalization of the musical instrument path which had been left to wither. This is a step in the right direction and the department needs to continue efforts to revitalize the musical instrument path. This shows that the curriculum design committee took into account issues that the students were facing with the old curriculum.

In addition there are several organizations that provide practical training placements for the students in the program indicating there is a market interest in the skills taught through the curriculum even in these times of fiscal austerity.

IMPROVEMENT

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

From discussions with the department faculty they have ideas about how the curriculum could be improved and were open to suggestions and change. However this could be better articulated more formally in the internal evaluation report. A good idea mentioned by the faculty involved in teaching musicianship is to introduce the ability to test-out of a course on the basis of adequate prior knowledge. This is done in order to address the wide variety of prior music training of the incoming students. The chair of the department is aware of the need to enhance the musical instrument path.

B. Teaching

APPROACH:

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

Please comment on :

- Teaching methods used

There is not a defined and universal pedagogic policy by the Department with regard to teaching approach and methodology. The department can take advantage of the sessional faculty who teaches pedagogy to assist with developing better teaching methodologies and improving teaching effectiveness. Examples of exploring non-traditional teaching methods by members of the department currently include:

1. the small music ensemble class that follows a variable self-organized group formation that accommodates the wide diversity of student backgrounds in terms of music training
2. the use of optional tutorials for basic musicianship
3. peer-reviewed critiques of creative work in the creative music technology course
4. the use of group seminars and group exercises in the teaching methodologies course
5. and the open, participatory, collaborative, and engaging lab for instrument making

These teaching initiatives are important and should be continued and encouraged.

- Teaching staff/ student ratio

On paper the ratio of students per instructor could be worrying however everyday practice has shown that not all registered students attend classes regularly, and the number of the students who participate in theoretical classes regularly is still lower. The end effect is that in reality the ratio of students to instructor is reasonable. There was an observed sudden (and problematic) massive increase in student intake in 2010/2011 which has caused some pressure in course sizes over time but appears to be a temporary phenomenon with the current numbers being more reasonable for the existing staff.

- Teacher/student collaboration

The collaboration between the students and teachers is very good in most of the cases although there were complaints about few isolated instructors. The instructors are available to the students beyond regular class time to provide extra support lessons without receiving any extra compensation. Motivated students are able to book extra lab hours to further experiment on the realization of their ideas, which typically happens in the upper class division. We were particularly impressed by the close collaboration observed between the luthier faculty member and his students in the instrument making workshop. Another good example of teacher/student collaboration takes place in the recording courses in which senior students coordinated by the sessional instructor assist with the training of junior students. The participation of students in summer schools have been encouraged by faculty members. These are representative examples of good collaborations between students and faculty. This is not typical in higher education in Greece and is very positive.

- Adequacy of means and resources

The classrooms are not designed optimally for teaching. For example room acoustics could be better and this would provide a nice applied exercise for students in acoustics.

The laboratory space is good for the number of students and the equipment used for teaching is excellent and sufficient especially for sound technology. More workspaces for student group projects are planned as there is competition for the existing lab space.

The electronic labs are somewhat old fashioned and could be more modernized and closer to modern practice and the needs of sound technology students at very modest cost (for example open source hardware such as Arduino boards and Rasberry Pi).

- Use of information technologies

The use of information technologies for instruction (especially web resources such as eClass) seems to be limited. The department is clearly aware of this and is trying to increase usage. It our opinion that the course outlines and possibly the instructor notes should be easily accessible by the students and the community through the web.

- Examination system

The examination system follows standard practices of a midterm and final exam as well as grading assignments and projects.

IMPLEMENTATION

Please comment on:

- Quality of teaching procedures
- Quality and adequacy of teaching materials and resources.
- Quality of course material. Is it brought up to date?

The students struggle with foundation technical courses such as mathematics and physics as evidenced by the low completion rates of these course and the feedback the students provided to us. To overcome this problem we suggest making stronger connections between the taught material and the subject of sound technology as well as the material in upper level courses. The students need to be motivated and inspired from the beginning.

For many courses there is no suitable textbook written in greek. We believe that the students should be able to receive books written in foreign languages, mostly in English. The committee is aware of the limiting ministry regulations on this issue, but we firmly believe that these limitations should be amended in order to provide to the students the ability to come in contact with acclaimed reference books and to be familiarized with the international terminology. The use of internet and open access material can be used for this purpose.

We were only able to examine a subset of course outlines and notes and therefore any

conclusions we make are not representative for all course material. An observation that applies to more than one course is that some of the material covered is not particularly relevant and interesting for the topic of the course and the emphasis on sound and music technology. Some examples (by no means a comprehensive list) include:

1. the treatment of material science is taught too early in acoustics at the expense of more fundamental and relevant concepts of musical acoustics.
2. the programming and informatics courses could utilize more examples of sound and music processing as well as utilizing modern languages and software frameworks designed for artists such as Max/MSP, Chuck, Processing, Python. The existing material is somewhat outdated and not particularly relevant to the students.
3. the fundamental course for introducing mathematics combines basic topics and some more advanced one. Some of the more advanced topics should be integrated to in the courses where the concepts are needed. This helps the students understand the necessity and will enable them to obtain a more solid foundation.
4. the course of digital signal processing can be approached from an acoustic point of view with an emphasis on sound processing and digital audio effects

The requirement of a senior project is positive and the selection of projects offered is rich, relevant and up to date.

- Linking of research with teaching

There is generally little linking of research and teaching that we could observe. There is also potential in making better connections between the theoretical and laboratory parts of courses as well as between different courses. Research in this department includes creative projects, such as electroacoustic compositions, animations, short films, and recording studio productions among others which are conducted as part of upper level courses. The availability of the instrument making workshop, the multiple musical instruments, and the various studio spaces provide an excellent opportunity for interesting assignments and projects that reinforce the theoretical concepts learned in an applied and useful context. For example, rather than learning about sound pressure level only theoretically or in a contrived laboratory exercise the different musical instruments and spaces available could be used.

- Mobility of academic staff and students

There is interest in study abroad programs such as Erasmus as evidenced by bilateral agreements with other departments in Europe. However there is only a small number of students who have actually participated.

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

The evaluation of teaching materials, and instructors by the students has started recently (two years ago). The committee strongly recommends to the department to distribute periodically evaluation questionnaires to the students at the end of each semester for each course and not just when there is an upcoming internal or external evaluation. This will help the instructors to assess and improve their teaching methods. We have observed that the level of satisfaction of the current students is good but there is considerable variance among courses and instructors. We also recommend to the department to reach recent alumni and

poll their opinion on their studies. Faculty should be willing to re-examine their teaching approach if needed and can utilize the sessional staff member who has strong experience in pedagogy to assist with this process. It is essential that future internal and external evaluations include statistical data from the teaching evaluation otherwise this will be perceived as a weakness of the department.

RESULTS

Please comment on:

- Efficacy of teaching.

Since the committee did not have enough time to stay in classes and observe the quality and efficacy of teaching, it must rely on informal feedback from students.

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

Indeed, there are courses that the students are not able to score high grades and/or pass successfully in due time. These courses are mainly scientific ones based on the areas of mathematics, acoustics and electronics. The committee believes that the main reason for these discrepancies is the insufficient basic knowledge the students receive from the secondary education, and the fact that the department receives graduates from all different high school types (such as general/technical high schools, and non relevant directions such as the theoretical and financial ones).

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

It is impossible for most of the students to graduate in due time. The primary reason for the delay is the low level of basic knowledge most of the incoming students receive in secondary education. The senior thesis is also a bottleneck for students that have been a long time in the program. It is a critical component that should be retained even though it sometimes results in delays.

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

We believe that the Department understands the reasons for the aforementioned results.

IMPROVEMENT

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

Although the Department has a thorough knowledge of the efficacy of the teaching methods and their results in their internal report they do not propose any ways of improvement. In

discussions, though, between members of the evaluation committee and the faculty efforts to address this issue have been mentioned, such as rewriting notes and modernizing the curriculum.

C. Research

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

APPROACH

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

The department at the current stage appears to be mostly focused on teaching. They believe in the value of research but do not have a clearly articulated objective. We would expect that the permanent faculty should be more focused on research in view of their job security and continuity. Their small number combined with their very different areas of specialization is a factor contributing to the low research output of the department. The lack of job security, the long commute distances of the sessional faculty (most of which do not live on the island), and their need to pursue work outside the department, inhibits their research engagement. Another factor to consider for both permanent and sessional faculty is their heavy teaching load and lack of a graduate program (Masters and/or PhD). Most of the research output of the faculty has been conducted prior to their appointment at the department and in some cases is not related to the nature and scope of the department. At the same time, there is some recent published work by permanent faculty that has technological character, is of appropriate standard, and fits the nature of the department. Some of the sessional faculty is also active in research and in a particular case received a prestigious peer reviewed international award for research in creation. This type of work should be nurtured and encouraged.

It is important to acknowledge that TEI departments have a primary focus on undergraduate teaching and heavy teaching loads so research takes second place. Although there is no explicitly stated research objective, from their internal evaluation report the department is interested in increasing their research activity and their recent acquisition of state of the art infrastructure will be a motivating factor to do so. We believe that increasing the number of permanent faculty or even increasing the contract length of sessional faculty (from one to two or three years) would have a positive effect on the ability of the department to conduct research.

- Has the Department set internal standards for assessing research?

The department does not have clearly articulated standards for assessing research but have collected the publications of the faculty, describe their impact to the community, and list the grants they have been able to acquire.

IMPLEMENTATION

- How does the Department promote and support research?

The department has supported research by providing space and facilitated obtaining state of the art equipment through grants for research projects. The department also supports current projects and research labs by engaging students during their undergraduate thesis and their practical training. Faculty are encouraged to publish and pursue grants.

- Quality and adequacy of research infrastructure and support.

The department is housed in good quality buildings (better than many TEI institutions in Greece). Recently they acquired more space after the relocation of another department that was sharing the building with. Currently they have excellent housing facilities for the current size of the department and reasonable room to possibly expand in terms of research space. There is some state of the art research infrastructure recently obtained through grants that is not yet utilized and has potential.

- Scientific publications.

The committee thinks that for scientific publications there is room for improvement in terms of their number, quality and relevance to the department scope. At the same time we acknowledge the context of heavy teaching and administrative duties. For example some of the best senior theses we examined were of sufficient quality that with some help from faculty could be presented at national conferences.

- Research projects.

The department has been successful especially in recent years in obtaining and participating in research projects. These projects have brought cutting edge equipment to the department which will stimulate research activity and provide a fertile ground for student projects. The committee notes as a positive aspect that the research projects leverage connections to the physical location of the department in the Ionian islands. For example there is an interesting project on recording and preserving the different soundscapes of the Ionian islands with both sound and video.

These research projects have greatly contributed to the quality of the research infrastructure of the department and significantly enhanced the teaching of the undergraduate students both by providing state-of-the-art equipment and training opportunities.

- Research collaborations.

The department has made an effort to reach out to other institutions in the context of programs for student exchange such as Erasmus. Another area of supporting collaborations has been the organization and hosting of conferences at the national level by the department. This has raised their visibility and opened opportunities for additional research collaborations.

- Creative Activities

The committee also wants to acknowledge the creative output of students and members of the department as evidenced by electroacoustic compositions, animations, short-films, and instrument making. The students have shown initiative and skill in pursuing creative activities beyond the required curriculum work including instrument building (particularly noted), ensemble playing, sound design and audio production.

RESULTS

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

There are no clearly articulated research objectives therefore it is not possible to answer this question.

- Scientific publications.

There is some publication activity and we believe there is potential for more, engaging a larger number of faculty members.

- Research projects.

The department has recently attracted research projects which is positive and should continue to aggressively pursue this. These funds have contributed significantly to improving the research infrastructure of the department.

- Research collaborations.

The research collaborations of the department have been limited and mostly at the national level.

- Efficacy of research work. Applied results. Patents etc.

There is potential of leveraging the recently obtained research infrastructure to conduct influential applied research especially in the area of instrument making and historical instrument recreation. At the moment this is an interesting potential that needs to be actively encouraged. It is important to actively connect research in acoustics with the practical aspects of instrument making and the department is uniquely positioned to do so. They have not obtained any patents.

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

The department research is not actively promoted and visible outside the department, with very few exceptions. We were pleasantly surprised to discover some of this research output during the site visit as it was not highlighted in the internal evaluation report and the department website. An example is the prestigious international Ars Electronica prize obtained by one of the sessional members.

IMPROVEMENT

- Improvements in research proposed by the Department, if necessary.

There needs to be a more articulated vision about research in the department.

- Initiatives in this direction undertaken by the Department .

Through informal discussion with members of the department there are ideas for future research but these need to be more clearly articulated. For example the faculty could formulate a list of research objectives and could report on their progress in achieving them. Clear targets would be beneficial.

D. All Other Services

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

APPROACH

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

The administrative staff is adequate for the size of the department and appears to be competent, organized, and effective. The department has expressed the need for an additional person for technical support. An important issue that seems to have been resolved to some extent is the slow access to the internet and the fragility of the network/power infrastructure.

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

The department does not have a specific policy for simplifying administrative procedures. From our experience there does not appear to be a need for such a policy as all the procedures are conducted electronically and both the administrative staff and the students commented on how things are running smoothly. We would like to note the excellent relation between the administrative staff, the department chair, and the students which was clearly articulated by all parties.

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

The good facilities of the department contribute to the continuous presence on campus of students, more than what is typical in TEI institutions. This was commented by faculty and staff and observed by the evaluation committee during the site visit. The students are clearly engaged and present on campus beyond their scheduled classes and labs. The architecture and layout of the site with an internal courtyard and multiple buildings provide an attractive environment for student interaction and engagement.

IMPLEMENTATION

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

The department has very good administration and effective for its size especially considering other higher education departments in Greece. It consists of 3 secretaries with an explicit and clearly defined allocation of roles and responsibilities. There is no person responsible for technical support and the IT infrastructure and that has been identified as an area of weakness by the department and the committee. Two of the secretaries are hired sessionally on a yearly basis. Hiring them permanently or at least on longer than yearly contracts would ensure that the departments continues to function effectively.

- Form and function of academic services and infrastructure for students (e.g. library, PCs and free Internet access, student counseling, athletic- cultural activity etc.).

There is very small but organized library. There is wireless access that has experienced some problems in the past. The students expressed frustration with the quality and regularity of wireless access. There was no evidence of support for student consulting and athletic activities are limited to the use of a neighboring facility. The isolated nature of the department makes it hard to provide such services compared to larger campuses involving multiple departments.

RESULTS

- Are administrative and other services adequate and functional?

The administrative and other services are adequate, organized, and functional. The ratio of administrative staff to students is very good not only compared to other departments in Greece but also to international institutions. The student cafeteria provides reasonably good food.

- How does the Department view the particular results.

The department expressed satisfaction with the current administrative support. The only issues identified by them (and which we support) are the hiring of a technical person for IT support/studio maintenance and the temporary nature of the sessional administrative staff.

IMPROVEMENTS

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

The department has clearly articulated their satisfaction with the current status and provide reasonable requests for improvement mentioned above.

- Initiatives undertaken in this direction.

The department has clearly described in their internal evaluation report what is needed in terms of positions.

Collaboration with social, cultural and production organizations

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

The Department has developed some collaborations with local and national institutions. These have taken the form of events organized by the department open to the general public such as concerts, hosted festivals, workshops, and national conferences (such as the Days of Electroacoustic Music festival). They have made an effort to engage the local community such as schools. Many of the aforementioned activities received positive feedback and coverage by the local press and media. The Committee recognizes the quality, originality and importance of the above-stated initiatives and recommends to the Department to sustain and intensify its activities in this area. Another positive item of note is the sponsorship of some of the department events by a local company and the more general support provided by the local community at both the town and island level.

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

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

Please, comment on the Department's:

- Potential inhibiting factors at State, Institutional and Departmental level, and proposals on ways to overcome them.
- Short-, medium- and long-term goals.
- Plan and actions for improvement by the Department/Academic Unit
- Long-term actions proposed by the Department.

In their internal report the Department have discusses some future directions. It is self-evident, though, that the Department will benefit from a concrete setting of vision, aims, objectives and developing plans.

The main factor inhibiting operations and growth is the small number of permanent faculty that at the same does not sufficiently cover the scope of the department. This makes longer term planning more difficult. The department chair is actively trying to obtain permanent positions (with specialities and background directly related to the department's scope) that would enable long term vision and planning. The current austerity situation makes this particularly challenging. Research groups need stability in order to mature, which is very hard to achieve when the future of many faculty in the department is uncertain.

The department already has experienced loss of sessional faculty some of which obtained positions in Universities even at this challenging time.

F. Final Conclusions and recommendations of the EEC

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

Conclusions and recommendations of the EEC on:

- the development of the Department to this date and its present situation, including explicit comments on good practices and weaknesses identified through the External Evaluation process and recommendations for improvement

The department was founded in 1999. In 2011 the department initiated a curriculum redesign process followed by the compilation of an internal evaluation report.

Good practices noted by the committee include: openness to a diversity of academic topics, student and teacher collaborations, and the pursuing of research grants that provide funding enhancing the existing infrastructure. The low ratio of permanent faculty to sessional faculty is a problem.

The committee recommends the following (grouped in the different areas described in the report):

CURRICULUM

As a general observation we believe there is considerable room for improvement in connecting the topics taught with their specific applications in sound technology. Specific example include:

1. The common core needs to be redefined to better balance the two paths in the department.
2. The courses in instrument making should be more effectively integrated with the labs and more general teaching of acoustics.
3. Courses in musical instrument making should be more and begin earlier. Ideally the areas of wind instrument making and repair, piano and bowed string instruments should also be revitalized as describing in the organizational chart provided by the department. This could be done by removing courses such as electronics as requirements for students pursuing the instrument making path.
4. An introductory course in musical acoustics (for example using the material from Musical Acoustics by Donald Hall) should be taught in the first semester so that the students can engage early in material that is directly relevant to the scope of their studies and not just foundation material.
5. Material testing has to be removed from general acoustics and has to be incorporated at higher level courses and not in the common core.
6. The advanced topics in the introductory mathematics course such as ODEs, PDEs, Fourier and Laplace should be moved to upper level courses and integrated with their application in audio and acoustics.
7. The courses in digital signal processing should utilize examples from the audio

domain and connect to the processes they use in other courses such as mixing and emphasize the relevance.

8. The introductory computer science courses should revisit their structure. The current language and topics are outdated and not relevant to music technology. We recommend the use of more modern programming environments and languages such as Max/Msp, Chuck, PureData, Supercollider or Python that would engage the students with sound and music applications.
9. The teaching of musicianship is an important aspect of the training that positively differentiates graduates of the department from graduates of private (IEK) applied sound engineering programs. It could be further enhanced by possibly incorporating more ear training.

TEACHING

The teaching evaluation that was conducted as part of the internal evaluation process needs to become part of the regular teaching process and take place every time a course is offered. The evaluation should follow the European recommendations such as taking place 4 weeks before the exam and being handled by students or online rather than by the instructor. The initial work in teaching evaluation done as part of the internal evaluation report provides a good starting point for this process even though the committee was not able to see the outcome for logistical reasons.

Courses that create roadblocks in student progress need to be carefully examined and redesigned. This process should be informed by the ongoing teaching evaluations.

The course materials and notes should be regularly revised and updated informed by the teaching evaluations and current practices and trends. More permanent faculty are required in order to provide continuity in teaching and planning.

The department needs to have more control in determining which students are accepted and what skills they require. The current regulations provide no control of the department to the students it receives making effective teaching difficult.

The faculty should utilize by the sessional instructor who specializes in pedagogy to assist them with this process.

RESEARCH

The committee suggests that the department should try to emphasize and encourage research that is more directly linked to the directions and teaching topics of the department.

The integration of the instrument making workshop and the acoustics lab has potential for interesting research that should be pursued.

The department should actively pursue and develop summer schools (in English) on their facilities as this would provide an excellent opportunity to increase visibility, attract collaborations and potential sponsors, and expose students to people and ideas from other institutions both national and international. There is clear support for such endeavors from the upper level administration of the TEI of the Ionian islands.

ALL OTHER SERVICES

Existing regulations in hiring are extremely centralized and inflexible. The department, especially given its specialized nature, needs to have more flexibility in making hiring decisions. For example the ability to hire an experienced and established luthier should be hindered by the unreasonable requirement of a formal degree in this case. The goal should be quality and excellence.

- the Department's readiness and capability to change/improve

The department is capable of changing and improving. However it is hindered by factors beyond its control such as lack of flexibility in hiring, uncertainty in budget, and small number of permanent faculty.

- the Department's quality assurance.

The internal evaluation report serves as a good tool in quality assurance. We hope that the department continues to reflect on its practices and follows a regular process of self assessment and quality assurance.

The Members of the Committee

	Name and Surname	Signature
1.	George Tzanetakis	_____
2.	Alexandros Kontogeorgakopoulos	_____
3.	Vassilis Kallis	_____
4.	Gottfried Schubert	_____