



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ  
**Α.ΔΙ.Π.**  
ΑΡΧΗ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ  
ΑΝΩΤΑΤΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ

HELLENIC REPUBLIC  
**H.Q.A.A.**  
HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY  
FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

## **EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT**

**DEPARTMENT: INTERNATIONAL TRADE**

**TEI OF WESTERN MACEDONIA, KASTORIA, GREECE**

Version 2.0  
November 2010

## 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 INTERNATIONAL TRADE of the Technical Institution of WESTERN MACEDONIA - KASTORIA consisted of the following four (4) expert evaluators drawn from the Registry constituted by the HQAA in accordance with Law 3374/2005:

1. Professor Spyros Hadjidakis (President)  
University of Nicosia, Cyprus
  
2. Professor Allan Webster  
Bournemouth University, UK
  
3. Professor Kostas Karantininis  
University of Copenhagen, Denmark
  
4. Mr. Meletis Meletiou  
Expert-Senior Director Finance and Development, McDonald's Hellas LTD, Greece

**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**

The Department of International Trade is located on the Kastoria campus of the TEI of Western Macedonia together with the Departments of Public Relations and Communication and Informatics and Computer Technology. The main campus of the TEI of Western Macedonia is in Kozani and it includes the School of Economics and Administration comprising the Departments of Accounting, Business Administration and Applied Finance.

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) visited the Department of International Trade of TEI of Western Macedonia in Kastoria on November 16 and 17, 2010. The EEC’s visit was well prepared and organized. The attitude throughout was professional, welcoming and helpful.

(a) The EEC met and conducted interviews with

- Members of the permanent teaching staff
- Members of the temporary teaching staff
- Active academic researchers
- Dean and the Rector
- Members of the administrative and technical support staff
- Undergraduate students of the Department
- Postgraduate students of the Department
- Alumni of the Department
- The Erasmus liaison officer

(b) The EEC inspected

- The library
- Computer laboratories
- Lecture rooms and amphitheaters
- Administrative offices
- Seminar/meeting rooms
- Catering facilities

(c) The EEC examined the following

- Internal Evaluation Report
- Final grade reports
- Enrolment and student registration lists
- Faculty evaluations by students
- Final exam papers and scripts
- Assigned textbooks
- Undergraduate and postgraduate student dissertations
- Miscellaneous documents relating to the syllabus
- Faculty publications and contributions to conference proceedings
- Various legal documents and memoranda of collaboration with the local business community
- Documents relating to the MBA programme and collaboration with other universities

(d) The EEC also attended presentations and oral examinations of student dissertations. The Committee was also presented with a demonstration of the registration process and the “electronic secretary” platform.

#### II. The Internal Evaluation Procedure

The internal evaluation was thorough, balanced, fair and well documented. The EEC’s own evaluation confirms that it provided an accurate overview of the Department. The EEC is fully satisfied with the provision of further information on request.

## **A. Curriculum**

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

### **APPROACH**

The Department offers a 4-year undergraduate programme on International Trade and a 2-year MBA programme in collaboration with the University of Ternopil in Ukraine.

### **Undergraduate Programme (UG)**

According to the current Study Guide, the aims of the undergraduate programme cover the field of economic science with a focus on business and organizations, public and private, engaged in international trade and other forms of international business and finance. The aims are achieved by a programme which comprises theoretical, laboratory and combined courses. These are delivered over eight semesters with the 8<sup>th</sup> semester dedicated to a dissertation and a practical internship. The subject areas are consistent with the Journal of Economic Literature (JEL) description and codes.

The courses include:

- Standard courses on economic theory (Microeconomic and Macroeconomic Analysis, etc).
- Courses on quantitative techniques (such as Applied Econometrics, Statistics)
- International business courses (for example, International Marketing and International Financial Management)
- Courses specific to the economics of international trade
- Courses on finance and accounting (Financial Accounting, Business Corporate Accounting, etc)
- Specialized courses (such as E-Commerce and Logistics)

The current curriculum is the result of an extensive revision in 2003 of the original curriculum set by the Ministry of Education in 1996. The revised curriculum objectives were selected after a review of similar programs operating in Europe and the US. The Department has set the curriculum in conformity with appropriate international standards. The revision of the curriculum was determined in consultation with local stakeholders (Chamber of Commerce, Association of Fur Traders and students) and other universities in Greece and abroad. It reflects the regional strengths and priorities of Kastoria, which is a recognized centre for international trade in fur and leather. The result is a programme which is unique in its balance between theory and application in both economic and business analysis.

The EEC believes that the curriculum meets the highest international standards for Economics and Business programmes. This is not only based on our own experiences but is supported by the fact that graduates of the programme have been accepted for postgraduate studies in other Greek and European universities (e.g., Aegean University, Athens University of Business and Economics, University of Sheffield (UK), University of Coventry (UK) and University of Edinburgh (UK)).

### **Master in Business Administration (MBA)**

The Programme of Postgraduate Studies was introduced in the 2008-9 academic year. The MBA degree is jointly awarded by the Technological Institute of Western Macedonia and Ternopil National Economic University in the Ukraine. The MBA has two main aims. Firstly, it introduces new and innovative teaching methods. Secondly, it seeks to contribute to underlying economic competitiveness by producing highly skilled executives. The whole programme and all teaching material are in English. The subject areas are consistent with the Journal of Economic Literature (JEL) description and codes.

The MBA programme is under ongoing revision by the Coordinating Committee of Postgraduate Studies which represents stakeholders.

### **IMPLEMENTATION**

#### **Undergraduate Programme (UG)**

The faculty (both permanent and temporary) are well qualified to teach the specified courses. Their ability to deliver the curriculum and the motivation to do so is high, as shown by their CVs, student evaluations and our interviews of the students and faculty members. The main limitation in delivering the curriculum is the small number of permanent and administrative staff (a point discussed more fully below).

The resources in terms of infrastructure (building, equipment, library, IT) are of an excellent standard. They were inaugurated in 2008 as a result of a €13 million investment.

The professional rights of the graduates are established by Presidential Decree 174/2006 and are similar to other comparable TEI departments. However, it was brought to the EEC's attention that there is a contradiction between existing legislation and by-laws and decisions of Professional Chambers. This matter is of critical importance and should be addressed by the relevant authorities.

#### **MBA Programme**

Similar considerations apply to the MBA programme, the main distinction being that the MBA programme is self financing.

#### **Synopsis**

The curriculum in both programmes represents a highly effective means for achieving the stated objectives. They compare very favourably with similar economics and business programmes at other academic institutions in Greece and abroad. The curricula and their rationales are coherent, rational and clearly articulated.

The specified workloads and ECTS credits are appropriate and more than adequate. The assigned and recommended textbooks are up to date, relevant and useful.

### **RESULTS**

#### **Undergraduate and MBA Programmes**

The EEC feels that, in general, implementation of the curriculum is effective. There are, however, a number of issues which are considered below.

**IMPROVEMENT****Undergraduate and MBA Programmes**

At present, the Department has no plans for major improvements. The MBA was only introduced recently and the undergraduate programme has undergone a major revision. Minor modifications are undertaken as required.

## ***B. Teaching***

### APPROACH

#### **Undergraduate and MBA Programmes**

The Department does have a defined pedagogic policy which is to combine theoretically focused lecture courses with applied laboratories and workshops.

The teaching methods used are standard lectures supported by audio visual aids (e.g. PowerPoint), student intranet, lecture notes, laboratory work, workshops, field trips and guest lecturers.

The teaching staff/student ratio is 1 permanent faculty member per 104 enrolled undergraduate students which is very high by international standards. This, however, overstates the true picture because it does not take into account adjunct faculty nor does it exclude students who are registered simply to retake exams. As a result of the above considerations, there are different ways that the staff/student ratio can be recalculated. Nevertheless, the resulting number would still be high by international standards.

The EEC has observed a learning environment where students are happy, well motivated and feel encouraged by staff. We were impressed by the confident and articulate nature of the students.

According to Table 11-2.1, page 67 of the Internal Assessment Report, student enrolment in the 2010-11 academic year was 117 undergraduates, as we verified by checking the original enrolment records of the Ministry of Education. This was a major increase over the four previous years which varied between 50 and 80 undergraduate students. It is worth noting that the annual enrolment between 2003 and 2006 was around 300 students. These variations were the result of decisions by the Ministry of Education regarding higher education entrance requirements.

The use of information technologies, as discussed above, is extensive. Students are assessed by midterm and final examinations as well as projects, assignments and dissertations. The EEC examined samples of both exam papers and completed dissertations. The exam questions were set at a satisfactory level of difficulty.

### IMPLEMENTATION

The EEC met with a group of about 80 students who expressed their opinions freely in an open discussion without the presence of the faculty. Students seemed to the EEC to be happy, well motivated and confident. They considered the standard of teaching high and the contact with the faculty members to be good. This is further reflected in the student evaluation of faculty. All the above are indications of good quality teaching.

Teaching material, resources and course materials are all of suitable standard and up to date. It is the policy of the Department to encourage research as a way of keeping staff up to date with subject material.

The Department has participated in the Erasmus and Leonardo programmes with academic institutions in France, Germany, Belgium and the Czech Republic. Outgoing academic staff mobility comprised 33 visits over the past eight years while incoming mobility comprised 48 visits from other institutions over the same period.

Undergraduate student mobility of the Erasmus programme is rather low; there have been

23 outgoing visits since 2002 and none in the last two years. There were 21 incoming visits. On the other hand, student mobility at the MBA level is satisfactory.

There is a formal procedure for the evaluation of teaching. The EEC inspected a sample of student evaluation reports which were highly positive.

## RESULTS

The standard of students on entry is low, as reflected in their national examination grades. In the academic year 2010-11, the minimum entry grade 2.7/20, the maximum 15.4/20 and the average 5.5/20. For the same year, there were only 8 students enrolled with a grade higher than 10/20. This imposes a considerable teaching burden on the department. As can be seen below, there are indicators that this is a challenge that the Department meets effectively.

Despite the low entry standards, the Department achieves high pass rates at the undergraduate levels; for example, an average of approximately 7/10 was achieved in each of the last seven years. On the other hand, the average entry grade for the MBA Programme is 6.5/10 and the average graduation grade is 78/100 taking into account that the pass mark is 60/100.

About 50% of undergraduates successfully complete their degree within six years, 35% graduate within seven to eight years.

Approximately, 80% of graduates find employment on graduation. According to a survey of alumni, 69% of employed graduates are successfully employed in the private sector, 22.5% in the public sector and about 8.5% have their own business.

The Department offers English, French, German and Russian terminology courses, which are compulsory. The EEC feels, however, that the command of the English language of the students we met is not satisfactory. This is a key cause of the unwillingness of students to participate in the Erasmus Programme.

The main discrepancy in pass rates for individual courses is between quantitative and other courses. Table 11-3.2, pages 71-73 of the Internal Evaluation Report, provides the relevant statistics. This is a direct consequence of the low standards on entry.

The difference in time taken to graduate, as explained to us by the Department and the students, reflects that (1) a number of students are effectively part-time since they have jobs and (2) there is wide variation in entry standards.

The EEC firmly believes that the best test of efficacy of teaching is value added – the difference between grades on leaving the Department and the grades on entry. On this criterion, and on the criterion of employment of graduates, we believe the Department to have been very successful in teaching.

## IMPROVEMENT

Both staff and students believe that the introduction of the MBA Programme has improved the Department generally and strengthened the undergraduate programme.

Regarding the MBA Programme, the involvement with a foreign university is an important initiative towards improving collaboration and international orientation.

### **C. Research**

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

#### **APPROACH**

The Department has a policy to encourage research publications and contributions to conference proceedings. Members of staff are also encouraged to be active in pursuing research funds.

The Department regards four papers in the last five years as an adequate standard of research. Eligible papers comprise:

- Conference proceedings
- International refereed journals
- Other publications which have been subjected to independent refereeing

The Department has a Research Committee for assessing research performance. However, formal research assessment procedures are set by national legislation.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION**

The Department has several informal means of encouraging research. These are:

- Partial exemption from some teaching and some administrative duties
- Sabbaticals (formal requirement)
- Conference funding
- Direct funding of research costs
- Provision of research means (computing facilities, access to online publications, etc)

The Department has excellent facilities for research such as hard copies of academic journals, textbooks, as well as electronic research databases provided by the Ministry of Education.

The Department organizes an annual international conference on Applied Economics. The first two were hosted in Kastoria and the third in Athens, in collaboration with the University of Athens. These have resulted in two special issues of the Journal of European Economy, one special issue of the Journal of International Trade, Law and Policy, one special issue of the International Journal of Computational Economics and Econometrics and one special issue of the International Journal of Financial Economics and Econometrics.

The EEC was presented with evidence regarding the research output of the Department during the last eight years. Specifically, the permanent staff of the Department have published 8 books, 78 refereed journal articles and 84 conference proceedings. The adjunct faculty have published 2 books, 36 refereed journal articles and 5 conference proceedings.

In addition, the EEC was informed that the research of the Department has been cited in 99 journal articles and 107 conference proceedings. The faculty of the Department has participated in 30 editorial boards of various journals and 33 organizing committees of various conferences.

Some of the publications produced by the Department are in international journals of very high repute and others are in much lesser known journals, including some which are not included in the Social Sciences Citation Index (SSCI). This is usual in Economics and Business Departments in many universities from Greece and elsewhere.

The Department has established research collaborations with a large number of academic institutions such as the Department of Economic Sciences, Selwyn College, University of Cambridge, Universidad Carlos II, Madrid, Spain, University of Salamanca, Spain.

**RESULTS**

The Department's research objectives have been fully implemented as shown by the number of journal articles and other research publications.

In many instances, the publications are of high quality. Furthermore, there is some evidence that research conducted in the Department has had an impact on business. Under questioning, the Department was able to provide examples of applied research relevant to the Greek industry and governmental policies.

The Department's research has a high profile in Greece and internationally.

**IMPROVEMENT**

The Department should be more active in seeking research funds from European programmes and private sector sources. The Department is not currently allowed to have a PhD Programme, which hinders research efforts.

The active researchers should be encouraged more to involve MBA students in research. There is evidence of some good quality research from the adjunct faculty and more needs to be done to develop this.

### **D. All Other Services**

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

#### **APPROACH**

The Department recognizes that its infrastructure in terms of building and equipment is of a very high standard. It is also concerned about the shortage of administrative and technical support staff. Currently there is only one secretary, one librarian and one IT support technician. The Department uses part-time students (2-hour contract) to assist with administrative tasks.

In order to facilitate administrative procedures the Department has made extensive use of the “electronic secretary” platform whereby students can self register and follow up on grades, lecture notes, etc.

Student presence is encouraged by a number of means such as sports facilities and various clubs. The good condition of the buildings indicates a strong sense of ownership by the students.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION**

The Department is well run but it is only because of the substantial involvement of permanent staff in administration and the efforts of the secretary to accomplish all administrative tasks. The involvement of the permanent staff is at the expense of teaching and research time. This is not desirable, nor is it appropriate for the Department to rely on the willingness of the administrative staff to work excessive hours.

The library resources are excellent and up to date, there are several extremely well equipped computer laboratories and free wireless internet areas.

However, there is no evidence of formal student counseling. Such needs are met by teaching staff on an informal basis. There is a restaurant/cafeteria but there are no residence halls and students have to rent commercially.

#### **RESULTS**

The administration, given the above mentioned constraints, is effective. However, it should be improved by the hiring of more administrative and support staff.

The Department is well aware of these problems but the resolution is not under their control.

#### **IMPROVEMENTS**

The central administration, and the Department in particular, have invested heavily in the “electronic secretary” platform in order to alleviate the administrative problems mentioned above. This has achieved a partial but not a complete solution.

**Collaboration with social, cultural and production organizations**

The Department has made efforts to cultivate ties with the local community and has pursued a series of collaborative cultural activities.

The Department has created a free university lecture series with the support of the local municipality. It has organized various one-day seminars on several topics ranging from introduction to research, to gender issues, to encouraging entrepreneurial activity among students, etc.

The EEC was provided with a copy of a memorandum of collaboration with the Kastoria Fur Trade Association.

***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.*

A major constraint is the system of funding used by the Greek State and the TEI of Western Macedonia, where funds are distributed without taking into consideration the number of enrolled students and the needs of specific departments. Other major constraints include:

- A shortage of permanent staff
- A shortage of administrative and support staff
- A system of allocation of students which results in recruitment being focused on entrants with low grades
- The lack of a PhD programme
- Restrictions on the Department's ability to generate additional revenues (for example, rental of facilities when not in use)
- In general, the rigid and extensive network of regulations under which the Department has to operate

Although formally there are strategic short-, medium- and long-term plans, the EEC is concerned that there does not exist a genuine sense of strategic vision. The Department does have clearly defined goals but their achievement is restricted by current uncertainty and the lack of freedom of action. Nonetheless, the EEC feels that a better sense of direction would equip the Department to successfully exploit any new opportunities that arise.

## ***F. Final Conclusions and recommendations of the EEC***

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

The EEC feels strongly that the Department is excellent in both teaching and research despite the constraints that we have identified above. Of particular note is the high employment rate of the Department's graduates. Nonetheless, there are a number of issues which require attention:

Low quality of students in terms of entrance grades (for example, only eight students out of 118 had a grade above 10/20). In part, this could be addressed by better promotion of the Department.

The shortage of permanent faculty, administrative and support staff needs to be addressed. Under current conditions of financial restraint, this means that a pooling of resources with one or more other higher education institutions in the region should be considered (such as similar departments at TEI and the University of Western Macedonia).

However, any pooling of resources should seek to preserve the existing strength of Department. Our report shows that the Department offers a high value added for a low resource cost. It has excellent infrastructure which has recently been completed with an investment of €13 million. The EEC believes that these are important strengths that should not be diminished.

The current name of the Department (International Trade) does not adequately reflect the true content of the undergraduate degree which is more a combination of a standard programme in economics and business with some specialist courses in international trade. A change in name and its potential advantages and disadvantages should be carefully researched and considered.

The Programme should be promoted with the active involvement of the local authorities (municipal and regional) given the fact that there is a high integration with the local community and the fur industry.

Students in Kastoria are able to benefit from a lower cost of living than in other locations and a pleasant environment within easy reach from other urban centers as a result of the new, improved motorway network. At the Department, students expressed happiness and satisfaction with the Programme, the facilities and their employment prospects. A strong feeling of belonging and ownership was evident in the students. Overall, these factors create a strongly positive student experience.

The EEC found, through discussions with the students and staff, that there is confusion regarding the professional rights of the graduates. The solution to this problem would greatly improve student recruitment and attractiveness of the Programme.

The Department has produced short-, medium- and long-term plans. Despite this, there appears to be a lack of emphasis on strategic planning. Largely, this is a consequence of their limited freedom of action but the Department should be actively pressing to be given more flexibility in key areas, for example, in recruitment or generating revenue from other sources.

The EEC believes that the MBA Programme is a valuable and useful addition and we recommend that the Ministry permits it to continue.

The Members of the Committee

TECHNOLOGICAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE OF WESTERN  
MACEDONIA (KASTORIA CAMPUS)  
DEPARTMENT OF INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Name and Surname

Signature\*

1. Professor **Spyros Hadjidakis**, University of Nicosia,  
Department of Finance and Economics, School of Business, Nicosia, Cyprus
  
2. Professor **Kostas Karantininis**, University of Copenhagen,  
Institute of Food and Resource Economics, Copenhagen, Denmark
  
3. Professor **Allan Webster**, Bournemouth University,  
The Business School, Executive Business Centre, Bournemouth, United Kingdom
  
4. Mr. **Meletis Meletiou**, Senior Director Finance and Development,  
McDonald's Hellas LTD, Athens, Greece

\*The original signatures were placed on the archive copy of the HQAA