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ΑΝΩΤΑΤΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ

HELLENIC REPUBLIC

H.Q.A.A.

HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY

FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

FACULTY OF VETERINARY MEDICINE

ARISTOTLE UNIVERSITY OF THESSALONIKI

September 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 constraints.

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 Faculty of Veterinary Medicine of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki consisted of the following five (5) expert evaluators drawn from the Registry constituted by the HQAA in accordance with Law 3374/2005 :

1. Dr. Panagiotis Mantis, DVM, DipECVDI, FHEA, MRCVS _____(President)

(Title) (Name and Surname)

The Royal Veterinary College, University of London

(Institution of origin)

2. Dr. Theofanis Kanellos, DVM, MSc, PhD, OVS, MRCVS

(Title) (Name and Surname)

Global Alliances, Pfizer Animal Health

(Institution of origin)

3. Dr. Kostas Papasouliotis DVM, PhD, DipRCPath, DipECVCP, MRCVS,

(Title) (Name and Surname)

School of Veterinary Medicine, University of Bristol

(Institution of origin)

4. Professor Nikolaos Dervisis, DVM, PhD, DACVIM (Oncology

(Title) (Name and Surname)

College of Veterinary Medicine, Michigan State University

(Institution of origin)

5. Dr. Spiridoula Athanasiadou, BVetMed, PhD, MRCVS

(Title) (Name and Surname)

Scottish Agricultural College

(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

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) visited the Veterinary Faculty of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki from Monday 20th – Wednesday 22nd, September 2010. The committee members had been provided with the internal evaluation report (June 2010) prior to their visit and had the opportunity to review it in detail. The committee was also briefed by the chairman of HQAA Prof. Amourgis and by Prof. Ekonomou, the morning of September 20th 2010.

Upon arrival the EEC met with the Head of the Veterinary Faculty, Prof. Vlemmas and the chair of the Internal Evaluation Committee Prof. Raptopoulos. The EEC also had a welcoming and informative meeting with the Chancellor, Prof. Mylopoulos and Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Lialiou of the Aristotle University.

During the visit, the committee met with numerous teaching, research, administrative, technical staff, a small number of undergraduate students (due to the ongoing examination period) and with postgraduate students.

The meetings took place in the Veterinary Faculty at the University campus and the Companion Animal and Farm Animal Clinics including the farm at Kolchiko.

The Directors of the 5 Sections of the Faculty presented a summary of their activities. The Sections are:

Section 1-Department of Animal Structure and Function

Section 2- Animal Production, Ichthyology, Ecology and Protection of the Environment

Section 3- Department of Infectious Diseases, Parasitic Diseases and Pathology

Section 4- Department of Food Hygiene and Technology

Section 5- Departments of Clinical Sciences

The last day of the visit, two members of the EEC held separate meetings exclusively with students (both undergraduate and postgraduate), while 3 members of the committee visited the farm at Kolchiko.

The Faculty provided the committee with additional information/data as requested throughout the visit.

The list of documents reviewed includes:

1. The Internal Evaluation Report
2. The annual time table of the entire Curriculum
3. The Faculty’s Bulletin

4. The Internal regulations for Postgraduate Studies
5. The PowerPoint presentations from each Section
6. A sample of a PhD research proposal
7. Promotional material from different laboratories and clinics
8. A sample of MSc dissertations
9. The EAEVE draft evaluation report from the 11th of April 2002

The EEC found the internal evaluation report and relevant documentation very informative and essential for understanding the components and functions of the Faculty .

The committee felt that the objectives of the internal evaluation process were met and expresses its gratitude to all the contributors and members of the internal evaluation committee. In particular Professors Vlemmas and Professor Raptopoulos were essential contributors to the successful accomplishment of the evaluations and the committee felt that the organization and coordination of the visit program was very good. In addition, the contribution of the Vice-Chancellor Professor Lialiou during the final summary meeting was very productive and was the catalyst in appreciating the University's support and commitment to the Faculty.

The EEC realised that the Faculty had already considered the outcomes of the internal evaluation and several issues had already been discussed and possible solutions identified.

In particular the following priorities were identified and immediate action is required by the Faculty and University to support these areas:

1. The continuous development of the farm at Kolchico as a facility of strategic importance (teaching, research, economic)
2. The immediate recruitment of appropriately skilled support staff in all Sections in order to ensure the efficient function of the Faculty at all levels
3. The review and drastic rationalization of the present undergraduate curriculum in terms of quantity and quality in order to meet the modern day-one-skills for veterinary surgeons.

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?

UNDERGRADUATE

The curriculum aims to provide scientific, theoretical knowledge, and Day One Skills in three main areas: companion animals, production animals and food hygiene and technology.

POSTGRADUATE (MSc, Residency, and PhD programs)

The goal of the postgraduate program (MSc – 2 years in duration) is to provide advanced teaching and training in one of the following fields of study:

1. Food hygiene and public health
2. Production animal medicine and husbandry
3. Ruminant medicine, surgery, and obstetrics
4. Companion animal medicine
5. Companion animal surgery

Of the above, currently 2, 4, and 5 are active.

These goals are achieved by theoretical/didactic teaching and laboratory/clinical supervised practice (internal evaluation report, section 3.2, pages 24-33).

The goal of the residency program (3 years) is to provide clinical specialization in:

1. Veterinary Anaesthesia and Analgesia
2. Veterinary Dermatology

These goals are achieved through approved curricula from the European College of Veterinary Anaesthesia and Analgesia (ECVAA), and the European College of Veterinary Dermatology (ECVD).

The goal of the PhD program is to offer advanced clinical and research training in the areas of veterinary and biomedical sciences (3-4 years minimum). This goal is achieved through didactic lectures and conducting primary research (internal evaluation report, section 3.3, pages 34-42).

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

UNDERGRADUATE

The objectives, factors taken into account and appropriate standards were set by the EU directive 2005/36/EC. The Curriculum Committee visited 8 European and 1 USA schools prior to setting the current curriculum in order to familiarize with other curricula.

POSTGRADUATE (MSc, Residency, and PhD programs)

For the MSc and PhD programs, the objectives and factors taken into account include:

1. The need for the delivery of undergraduate practical/clinical training
2. The need for advancing strategic fields of Veterinary Science

3. The need to advance and promote the delivery of veterinary science in the private and public sector.

4. The need for the growth of veterinary and biomedical research

The appropriate standards are set and monitored according to University and Departmental policies.

The objectives and appropriate standards for the approved clinical residencies were set and monitored by the respective Colleges (ECVAA and ECVD) to fulfill the need for veterinary specialists.

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

Yes. For specific points see the EEC comments in Implementation.

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

A teaching committee researched and proposed the curriculum. A questionnaire was used to survey a large sample of the veterinary surgeons; interviews were held with representatives of companies that are related to the profession and discussions were also held with students during an initial consultation phase. The general academic assembly, which includes student representatives, modified and approved the curriculum.

• **Has the unit set a procedure for the revision of the curriculum?**

There are no regularly scheduled meetings of the teaching committee to discuss the curriculum. The committee only meets when individual academic members of the school raise issues.

IMPLEMENTATION

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

The goals of the Faculty are not defined or detailed in the internal evaluation report, to be assessed. Furthermore, they did not become clear during the visit.

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

UNDERGRADUATE

The Faculty has been accredited by the EU (2001) thus it compares favourably with the university accepted standards for the specific area of studies. The recent review of the curriculum (2006) has even further improved the standards for the specific area of study as suggested by the preliminary data on the graduation time and grade.

POSTGRADUATE (MSc, Residency, PhD)

The curricula compare favourably with the appropriate, universally accepted standards.

• **Is the structure of the curriculum rational and clearly articulated?**

UNDERGRADUATE

The curriculum is clearly articulated, but the structure requires further improvement:

- Significantly reduce overload of theoretical/classroom teaching, which is more pronounced in basic sciences.
- Incorporate small group teaching.
- Increase the clinical practice/training within the main curriculum.
- Increase extramural practice during the undergraduate years.
- Improve vertical integration with introduction of clinical subjects in earlier years together with the teaching of the appropriate part of basic sciences by the clinical teachers or vice versa.
- Avoid duplication in particular thematic areas.
- Reallocation of specialised topics from undergraduate to postgraduate level.
- Address the imbalance between scope and size of some Sections, such as Section 1.
- Relieve overload of the curriculum in the two final years.
- Reduce by at least 50% of the handout volume (10 pages/hour), which is often exceeded.
- It was not clear if the students are made aware of the specific learning objectives of each lecture.

POSTGRADUATE (MSc, Residency, PhD)

The curricula are clearly articulated.

- **Is the curriculum coherent and functional?**

UNDERGRADUATE

The program is adequately coherent and functional; however there are some critical issues that should be considered:

- Uneven distribution of teaching load during the course (i.e. semester 5).
- Irrationally small semesters followed by long examination periods.
- Teaching outside the scheduled timetable.

POSTGRADUATE (MSc, Residency, PhD)

The program is adequately coherent and functional.

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

UNDERGRADUATE

- The material is appropriate for some modules, but excessive for others (e.g. specialised information appropriate for postgraduate level is included in the undergraduate curriculum)
- The text books currently used are often dated; handouts provided by the academic staff in some modules help to update the knowledge to current levels.
- Section 1: lack of appropriate audiovisual and demonstrating material (e.g. no available horses, cows, exotics)

POSTGRADUATE (MSc, Residency, PhD)

The material and time offered are sufficient.

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

UNDERGRADUATE

All of the staff is appropriately qualified and trained in veterinary and related sciences. It is unclear if any of the academic staff has the appropriate training in pedagogic methodologies (i.e. teaching techniques and delivery, assessment methods, curriculum design and delivery).

- The resources available for the laboratory and the directed clinical training are generally considered adequate.
- The resources (support staff and equipment) available for training in companion animal clinical practice are considered suboptimal for a veterinary educational institute.
- The resources (support staff, equipment and clinical case load) available for production animals are considered substandard for a veterinary educational institute.

POSTGRADUATE (MSc, Residency, PhD)

All the staff are appropriately qualified and trained in veterinary and related sciences. The clinical caseload of companion animals is low for the total number of postgraduate students and the Faculty should identify ways to continue supporting adequately the increasing demands of advanced clinical training in the field of Companion Animal Medicine and Surgery. It has to be noted that the postgraduate training, as it has been set up, does not lead to specialization.

RESULTS

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

The goals of the Department are not clearly defined or detailed in the internal evaluation report and did not become clear during the visit, thus they cannot be assessed.

- **If not, why is it so? How is this problem dealt with?**

Not applicable. There is an immediate need to develop the Faculty's goals and objectives, along with well-defined and realistic timeline and efficiently quantifiable criteria. The current committees are over-subscribed, with no predefined agendas and clear timetables. This may result in difficulty reaching decisions in a timely manner.

- **Does the Department understand why and how it achieved or failed to achieve these results?**

Not applicable.

IMPROVEMENT

- **Does the Department know how the Curriculum should be improved?**

UNDERGRADUATE

Yes. Most of the faculty interviewed, expressed the need for further radical curriculum improvement. We were impressed by the passion, dedication, and commitment of the interviewed faculty staff.

POSTGRADUATE (MSc, Residency, PhD)

The MSc programs are recently established and their evaluation is ongoing, thus it is early to

draw definitive conclusions. The residency programs have not yet produced Diplomates. The PhD programs have produced numerous graduates, but no official data on performance have been generated (i.e. time to graduation, graduation grade, and percentage of PhD students graduating, number of publications, employment, etc).

The leadership of the School and the internal evaluation committee appeared to be working intensively for the implementation of the changes and academic attitude.

- **Which improvements does the Department plan to introduce?**

UNDERGRADUATE

1. Drastic reduction of the didactic teaching load
2. Increase of the practical/clinical teaching and training.
3. Merging of related Sections into a more functional and updated training unit, i.e. merging of the Section 2 with the Production Animal Clinic.
4. Regulation of private work by Faculty members to avoid interference with available resources for clinical training.
5. Identify ways in order to drastically increase the number of supportive staff, aiming to reach a minimum ratio of one supportive staff per faculty member.

POSTGRADUATE (MSc, Residency, PhD)

The department has formed a Committee on Research and Ethics to oversee and facilitate research advancement. Specific aims on the development of new focus research fields have been included in the School's Strategic Plan.

B. Teaching

APPROACH:

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

UNDERGRADUATE

Didactic lectures, small group teaching, clinical practice.

It appears specific teaching methods, such as e-learning opportunities and use of audiovisual teaching material (i.e. videos uploaded on Blackboard for home study, etc) are underused or absent. The Blackboard online learning environment is available; however, there was very limited material uploaded during our visit. VPN for access outside the university is available but according to the students it is of limited use.

POSTGRADUATE (MSc, Residency, PhD)

In addition to the methods used in the undergraduate teaching, a thesis is required.

- *Teaching staff/ student ratio*
For the undergraduate studies, the overall teaching staff/ student ratio is 1/5.8, which is considered adequate.
The ratio for the postgraduate studies is based on predefined University guidelines and is considered adequate.
- *Teacher/student collaboration*

UNDERGRADUATE

Teacher/student collaboration is variable; it appears to be dependable on the individual academic's will to engage students in their scientific field..

The central point of collaboration between teachers and students appears to be the examination process.

POSTGRADUATE

There is close teacher/student collaboration as directed by the University and Faculty's guidelines, and is considered adequate.

- *Adequacy of means and resources*

Problems regarding the adequacy of means and resources have been addressed in the analysis in the Curriculum and Teaching section.
- *Use of information technologies*

The availability of teaching software is considered adequate. The actual use of such software (e.g. Backboard) is in its infancy.

There is inadequate number of computers based on the number of undergraduate students per year.

- *Examination system*

UNDERGRADUATE

The examination process consists of essays, short answer questions, multiple-choice questions, oral and practical examination. This traditional system is considered adequate. Identified limitations include:

1. No examination committee to oversee and review the examination process.
2. Lack of quality control.
3. No useful statistical analysis on the examination results is being performed. As a result, problems cannot be identified and resolved.
4. Single evaluator process.
5. Complete lack of provision of model answers and allocation of grading points.
6. Lack of provision of examples of previously used examination questions and model answers for student familiarization with the examination procedure.

POSTGRADUATE

In contrast to the above, the postgraduate examination processes are effective with nearly 100% success rate.

IMPLEMENTATION

- *Quality of teaching procedures*

As there was no undergraduate teaching at the time of the visit, the EEC could not achieve real time evaluation.

Based on the internal evaluation report the procedures appear to be adequate.

The same applies to postgraduate teaching.

It has to be noted that the interviewed postgraduate clinicians expressed a very favorable opinion on the clinical training, attesting to the high quality of the clinical instructors.

- *Quality and adequacy of teaching materials and resources.*

The quality and adequacy of the teaching material for the undergraduate students is satisfactory.

There is a crucial issue related to the very low clinical caseload of livestock and particularly large ruminants.

There is great difficulty for the students to follow livestock training in health and production in their new facilities in Kolchiko, due to lack of:

- Support staff
- Adequate transportation means for the students
- Limited funds

For the postgraduate students, the current low clinical caseload and high number of students in training raises questions for the adequacy of advanced clinical training in the field of Companion Animal Surgery.

- *Quality of course material. Is it brought up to date?*

Greek textbooks are mostly dated. Handouts are available in the majority of modules, but the committee did not evaluate the handouts. Handouts were not available on the part of

Blackboard that the committee was given access to. During the student interviews no issues were raised in relation to the course material, with the exception of the high cost for printing and photocopying.

There is a need to annually review and update the course material.

The EEC did not evaluate to postgraduate handout material since samples were not provided and were not available online.

- *Linking of research with teaching*

The links are limited in most of the laboratories due to the lack of substantial research. The participation of students in research is constraint by the intensive curriculum and the absence of available funds.

- *Mobility of academic staff and students*

Students have the possibility to visit other universities and research institutes, funded mainly by EU programs such as ERASMUS.

The academic staff are allowed and encouraged to go on educational leave (sabbaticals) and participate in international conferences. It is worth noting that a number of academic staff have been actively involved in the organization of international conferences.

There are no formal arrangements for cooperation between the Veterinary School and other Institutions/schools regarding the training of students enrolled in MSc and residency programs.

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

There are available feedback forms completed by the students for each subject/semester. The questionnaires are filed in the secretariat of the school. These data are not appropriately analyzed, the teacher commonly is not made aware of the results and no further action is taken. This is a missed opportunity for the improvement of teaching quality.

With the exception of production animals and surgery post-graduate courses (the committee was informed that feedback is received in the form of questionnaires not seen by the committee), there is no formal evaluation for the content, study material/resources, and teaching of the under-graduate or postgraduate courses that the EEC committee was made aware of.

RESULTS

- *Efficacy of teaching.*

UNDERGRADUATE

There are no quantifiable criteria to adequately evaluate it.

The efficacy of teaching is not optimal, based on the high exam failure in some subjects, the low qualification grades (average 6.3/10) and the markedly extended time to qualify (average 8 years).

POSTGRADUATE

There are no quantifiable criteria to adequately evaluate it. A large study is ongoing (started in the year 2000) aiming to assess the future professional career of under- and post-graduate

students with the results pending.

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

The undergraduate students have noted that there is excessive rate of failure in certain subjects, such as biochemistry. As a consequence of the new examination system and the fact that results are not archived centrally (due to logistical issues), the administrators are currently not able to acquire data on success/failure rates for each subject.

The available data suggest no discrepancies in the successful completion of the MSc and PhD programs. Since their accreditation, the 2 residency programs have not yet produced any Diplomates.

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

- Average qualification grade is 6.3/10; between 2001-2007 no student graduated with a grade over 7. In 2008, one student graduated with grade over 7.

- In the period 2005-2007, only 15 out of 400 students qualified in 5 years; from these only 3 in 2007 qualified with grade higher than 7.

- Approximately 5% of the students qualify within the 5 years, approximately 14% within 6 years; most of the students appear to graduate within 8 years (average time for graduation).

-The new curriculum appears to have marginally improved the time to graduation and final degree grades,. However, the size of the available data is too small and therefore reliable conclusions cannot be drawn.

No information was provided for postgraduate students.

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

The internal evaluation report has not effectively addressed the negative results (low grades and lengthy graduation). From the discussion with the academic staff, it appears that they have formed opinions regarding the reasons, but the lack of quantifiable criteria for the assessment does not allow conclusions to be drawn and action to be taken.

No information was provided for postgraduate students.

IMPROVEMENT

- **Does the Department propose methods and ways for improvement?**

The department has introduced a new curriculum (2003), to address the above issues, but it is still early to draw any conclusions. Based on the information to date and the opinions voiced by several staff members, the following issues are critical for achieving improvement:

- Reduction of teaching load
- Reassignment of courses in more appropriate semesters
- Re-organisation of the assessment procedure
- Identification of ways to increase engagement of the students with the subject matters

No issues were raised for the postgraduate teaching.

- **What initiatives does it take in this direction?**

The Faculty has established committees for internal evaluation, curriculum, research and ethics. These committees are still at the stage of general consultation, thus the EEC cannot assess their effectiveness.

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 overall policy and related strategies are under review from the Faculty. The newly established Research and Ethics Committee (R&E) is engaged in developing the policy and main objectives in research.

During the assessment the committee identified that staff are mainly engaged in the following areas of research: livestock health and production, food hygiene and technology and companion animal medicine with the focus on comparative translational research for human health

- **Has the Department set internal standards for assessing research?**

This hasn't been achieved yet. One of the immediate tasks for the R&E committee will be to guide the direction, monitor and evaluate the research performed on a yearly basis, and assess the quality of the School's research. It will be beneficial if the committee expands its membership to experts outside the School.

IMPLEMENTATION

- **How does the Department promote and support research?**

The University has a central body that supports the different administrative aspects of research in all Schools and Faculties. It is unclear how much interaction there is between this body and the Veterinary Faculty. In addition, the Faculty's R&E committee has been tasked to support the scientific research efforts of the staff. The committee is promoting interdisciplinary collaboration within the Faculty and the University. There are significant constraints, at least at Faculty level, because there is no provision in the budget to fund innovation and research.

- **Quality and adequacy of research infrastructure and support.**

The quality of research infrastructure is generally considered adequate. The lack of some advanced technology equipment was noticeable. This could hamper the research efforts of the academic staff.

There is a distinct lack of support staff and key specialists (e.g. chemists, immunologists etc) that has adversely affected the quality of research.

There is a need of diversification within the research teams.

Finally, the lack of consistent and adequate funding from the government could lead to the extinction of any research activities within the School.

- **Scientific publications.**

Based on the internal evaluation report (section 12, page 394) the total number of scientific publications which are indexed by PubMed for the 2003-2007 periods is 423. This indicates that consistently for the last 5 years the average publications in peer reviewed journals indexed by PubMed is less than 1 paper per faculty member per year. However, it should be noted that certain faculty members are significantly more prolific in publishing than others, and this should be addressed from the Faculty by introducing policies that either reward or discipline accordingly.

- **Research projects**

There are very few research projects currently running. The main sources of funding for research come from the related local industry, government and European Union. The governmental scientific research calls are irregular, without predefined guidelines, which results in missing opportunities from the Faculty to acquire funding.

The current economic climate is expected to further limit the availability of funded research projects in the following years. As a consequence there is an immediate need to develop strategic planning to acquire external funding to promote research.

More importantly, the Faculty should invest in strategic partnerships with other Schools and research organisations and develop centres of excellence.

- **Research collaborations.**

There is a number of academic staff that is active in maintaining collaborations within and outside the University, including international collaborations.

The number of collaborations is low relative to the total number of academic staff and usually of small scale.

RESULTS

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

This cannot be evaluated at present, as there are no set specific objectives. It is apparent that the amount of research undertaken by the School is limited, with some noticeable exceptions.

- **Scientific publications.**

The EEC's PubMed research for the years 2008-2009 identified 148 papers. This indicates that for the last 2 years the average publications in peer reviewed journals indexed by PubMed is less than 1 paper per faculty member per year. It should be noted that certain Faculty members are significantly more prolific in publishing than others.

- **Research projects.**

There is a decline in active research projects in recent years, which is partly attributed to the small number of submitted applications and significant lack of University funding.

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

The output of research is measured by several parameters and is widely accepted that publications, competitive research awards, patents and product/services related research are good indicators. Based on the internal evaluation, the department has a good track record in abstracts and papers for the Hellenic scientific press. This is important for the knowledge transfer to the local veterinary and other relevant sectors in Greece.

The number of peer reviewed publications is low (<1 per faculty member) and those in high impact journals is very low, which is often seen in other Veterinary Schools in Europe. It is a problem that needs to be addressed if there is intend to increase the profile of the Faculty in Europe. Significant effort needs to be directed towards improving the publication record.

In addition, the number of competitive national and international research awards is diminishing. The total number of patents between 2003-2007 is 4. The committee was informed that all patents are still active and commercialised. It seems there is a good link between the Faculty and the local industry in certain Sections, such as 2 and 4, which should be further encouraged.

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

The number of awards and honorary distinctions is low (internal evaluation report p81, sct 5.7.3.). Some members of staff have honorary professorships from international Universities and one faculty member received the annual innovation award by the University of Thessaloniki, which is commendable.

The University does not have any strategies of collaboration with other research-based organisations and the Faculty in particular is not adequately represented in various research funding committees.

IMPROVEMENT

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

The Faculty has recognized there is need for improvement. There is no central clear strategy on how this can be achieved. Some of the main constraints are that the R&E committee does not have a predefined budget and authority to successfully implement any future research strategy. There is an ongoing review within the Faculty to address the identified constraints. The leadership team is engaged and dedicated in addressing successfully these issues.

- **Initiatives in this direction undertaken by the Department.**

Other than the establishment of the R&E committee, the School has not undertaken any other initiatives. The staff has identified the following critical issues:

- Lack of provision for funding
- Lack of strategic planning
- Lack of support for young investigators/lecturers
- Inadequate motivation for involvement in research (introduction of awards)
- Limited collaborations between Sections/interdisciplinary.
- Need for better links between basic and clinical research
- Requirement for review of research performance (set targets, links to career development)
- Rationalise the use and sharing of resources.
- Increase number of support staff
- Quality accreditation of research laboratories to attract industrial support
- Identify ways to increase the numbers of postgraduate students

The EEC, based on their experience from other Universities, believes that the School should also increase their public profile by promoting their work nationally and internationally with regular publications of activities and achievements (e.g. annual report).

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 University provides the supportive services (medical and psychological support,

accommodation, gymnasium and catering) to staff and students of the Schools. The services are of high quality.

IT and network services are also provided by the University. The limited number of staff (6 for the whole university) and the extremely limited budget frequently results in suboptimal and often delayed support. The lack of wireless services in all areas of the campus and in many areas within the veterinary school buildings inhibits student and staff access to online teaching and research materials.

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

The Faculty aims continuously to reduce bureaucracy and achieve paperless administrative procedures. There is a serious effort to simplify the procedures and make them available online. The legal framework and the limited web services inhibits such efforts.

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

Not applicable as this is a medical school with significant amount of clinical and laboratory training that requires all students to be present. In contrast, student presence can be at times excessive for the facilities of the school.

IMPLEMENTATION

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

The Faculty secretariat employs 6 members of staff. Some members of the staff are leased by private companies and thus are not considered university personnel. This limits the integration and specific required training of these members of the staff.

- **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 a Faculty library that employs two librarians. Limited number of books is available and some are dispersed in individual section libraries and offices, making it impossible to be traced. A search function should be made available electronically, which will enable tracing all books owed by the Faculty

There are available computer terminals for the students with access to online journals and information related to the taught subjects, including the Blackboard software, with notes, handouts and other teaching material.

For the operation and proper function of the secretariat and library no health and safety assessment, regulations or operation guidelines are in place.

Student counseling is provided by the University in the form of a psychologist, if necessary, while there is an up to date gymnasium and sports area that all students and staff are free to use at will.

RESULTS

- **Are administrative and other services adequate and functional?**

The services are considered inadequate. The administrative support functions sub optimally. The lack of permanent administrative staff, some leased by private companies, leads to frequent replacements, inconsistencies of services and forces academic staff to acquire a very heavy load of administrative work.

Increased bureaucracy impairs the functionality of these services especially at secretariat level. This is very costly for the Faculty as it engages highly skilled staff in performing secretarial and basic administrative duties.

- **How does the Department view the particular results?**

The Faculty and the University leadership are aware of the limitations in the function and service provision. However, the University is severely restricted by the available funding.

IMPROVEMENTS

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

The legal framework and lack of available funding at University level limits the application of any effective ways and methods to improve the services provided. Limitations have been identified and initiatives undertaken in this direction with minimal results due to financial constraints.

The Faculty continuous to promote a constructive and fruitful discussion with the University in order to sustain and when needed improve the services.

Collaboration with social, cultural and production organizations

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

Detailed information is presented in the internal evaluation report (page 83-86; section 6). The Faculty is engaged in a number of related activities that support the farming, companion animal, wild life and nutritional sectors. Overall the quality of the Faculty activities is considered excellent which underlines the importance of the Veterinary School in society.

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 Faculty has greatly improved in the last 2 decades which is reflected in the accreditation by the European Union committee in 2001. The staff show an impressive willingness and are passionate to contribute to further improvement.

More government funding opportunities should become available to assist researchers, and particularly young researchers, to enter and succeed in a highly competitive arena.

The University should aim to change the operational framework with the provision for more authority and autonomy to the Veterinary Faculty. The Government together with the University should empower the Head and the various committees of the Faculty with the necessary legal framework and means so to execute their policies. This should allow faster implementation of practical and functional updates and alignment with the continuously changing requirements and advancement in veterinary science.

The Faculty should make every effort to increase the human resources and any other necessary infrastructure such as the development of an animal isolation unit (already

planned to be ready by April 2011) at the farm of Kolchiko in order to appropriately train the new veterinarians.

There is a marked and immediate necessity to increase the overall supporting staff in the Veterinary Faculty to at least an 1 to 1 ratio with faculty members in order to avoid multitasking of specialized staff and especially in areas that they are not trained and/ or qualified to work.

Risk assessment should be carried out and guidelines for operation should be created for every area of practice including teaching, with action steps in case of an accident.

A small committee is required to oversee the health and safety issues of the faculty. This is not existent today and in many cases members of the staff are uncertain regarding the proper action steps in case of an emergency.

The presence of multiple small laboratories with limited, and in some instances outdated, resources can be combated by the creation of a centralized large laboratory fully equipped and updated that will be used for research.

Smaller basic satellite laboratories can be used only for teaching and specialized research. This will allow an immediate reduction in the cost of laboratory equipment purchase and increase in equipment quality without interfering with undergraduate or postgraduate training.

The lack of quality control for teaching and assessment necessitates the immediate creation of a small and functional teaching and quality assessment committee. This will create and oversee the quality control in teaching and assessment. This committee should have power to enforce changes.

Performance targets, based on the Veterinary Faculty strategic plan, are required for all members of the staff with annual or biannual appraisal of each member of the staff.

Promotions should be mainly based on performance and to a lesser extend on seniority. The Faculty should be given the authority to discipline underperformers and reward achievers. Avoidance of conflicts of interest within the staff evaluation process should be paramount.

The educational committee that has been created needs to be able to implement the curriculum faster, after consultation with the Faculty assembly. This consultation should be advisory and the committee should have the power to implement changes.

The curriculum needs to be markedly reduced. Although big steps have been taken by the Faculty in this direction, further reductions are considered necessary by the EEC . A high volume of core teaching should be transferred in the postgraduate level. The decision should be based on the day-one-skills. This will reduce the current load for the students and increase the provision of postgraduate courses.

Full interdisciplinary integration should be realised.

The Faculty has a high number of European-boards certified specialists but there are only two accredited post-graduate training programs. This is a good start and the Faculty should make every effort to create more and promote these programs in order to qualify more specialists in these areas. Staff should endeavour to train and acquire specialty board accreditation, particularly in areas that the Faculty currently is lacking a specialist. A minimum of one specialist per area should be a priority and a mid term goal at this stage.

The provision of continuing professional development courses should be increased. This will assist in further links with the veterinary practitioners and a possible income source for the Faculty.

Links and co-operation should be sought with other Veterinary Schools and Universities.

Commercialization of existing facilities (e.g. diagnostic laboratories) would link the training with the practice, will provide opportunities for more research opportunities and income for

the Faculty. The legal framework may need to be adjusted in order for this to be implemented.

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

The EEC met with a large number of staff, and a small number of undergraduate and postgraduate students. It was gratifying to see the high level of motivation and enthusiasm of the staff and their thirst for providing better education and hope of fulfillment of their future goals. This closely matched the EEC members' experience from their own institutions abroad. The members of the committee were particularly impressed with the marked improvement of the school over the past decade in all areas. This allows the Veterinary Faculty to continue the high quality training of undergraduates to become competent veterinary surgeons. Some recommendations that the committee members feel they have to be followed are listed below.

First of all, there are some issues endemic in Greek society which are beyond the control of the Faculty that may delay further improvement.

The very long time required to qualify, more than 8 years in many cases, could act as major disincentive at a personal (i.e. individual student) level, and collectively within the student community. Additionally, the lack, thus far, of systematic evaluation of academic institutions in Greece, results in inability to compare them with other national and international Institutes. In our view this is counter-productive and strongly supports the current drive for evaluation.

Central funding is another factor that is beyond the control of the Faculty, which should not stop asking for a renegotiation of this.

The lack of clarity about financial resources from the Ministry of Life Long Education and from the Ministry of Agriculture significantly impairs the Faculties ability to plan ahead in a rational manner.

This is of particular relevance in organizations expected to deliver education, research and animal health service, such as this Faculty.

Whereas this committee believes that these factors which are beyond the control of the Faculty are extremely important and need to be addressed, the committee also believes that they do not absolve the funding issue and the implementations problems. The Faculty needs to establish its overall strategy and re-evaluate its objectives on a frequent basis, develop a clear plan of action in a constructive way and improve overall efficiency.

Main issues that require immediate attention include::

- A. The low numbers of supporting staff members
- B. The uneven distribution of the academic members of staff across the Sections with regard to the educational needs
- C. The high number of Sections
- D. The overloaded curriculum

- E. Inefficient financial, operational and management mechanisms.
- F. Large, ineffective committees with very limited power to affect change
- G. Limited provision of accredited post-graduate clinical training
- H. Lack of mechanisms for effective staff review and development
- I. The suboptimal effort of funding utilization
- J. Limited efforts in identifying alternative sources of funding/income
- K. Lack of policy on health and safety issues
- L. Lack of risk assessments

The Members of the Committee

Name and Surname	Signature
1. Dr Spyridoula Athanasiadou	
2. Professor Nikolaos Dervisis	
3. Dr Kostas Papasouliotis	
4. Dr Theofanis Kanellos	
5. Dr Panagiotis Mantis	