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HELLENIC REPUBLIC

H.Q.A.

HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE AND
ACCREDITATION AGENCY

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

DEPARTMENT of Nursing

UNIVERSITY OF PELOPONNESE

December 2013



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External Evaluation Committee

The Committee responsible for the External Evaluation of the Department of Nursing of the University of Peloponnese consisted of the following five (5) expert evaluators drawn from the Registry constituted by the HQAA in accordance with Law 3374/2005 :

1. **Prof. Alex Molasiotis**, Professor, School of Nursing, Director, WHO Collaborating Centre for Community Health Services, The Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong (**Coordinator**)
2. **Prof. Athanasios Karatzias**, Faculty of Health, Life & Social Sciences, Edinburgh Napier University, Edinburgh, Scotland, United Kingdom
3. **Dr. Andreas Pavlakis**, Assistant Professor, Open University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus
4. **Dr. Vassilis Raftopoulos**, Associate Professor of Nursing, Department of Nursing, Cyprus University of Technology, Lemesos, Cyprus
5. **Dr. Amalia Tsiami**, Senior Lecturer, School of Psychology, Social Work and Human Sciences, University of West London, London, United Kingdom.

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.

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?

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) welcomes the opportunity to participate in this evaluation instigated by the Ministry of Education of the Government of Greece. The external evaluation took place between the 16th and 18th of December 2013. The EEC was warmly welcomed by the members of the Department of Nursing at Peloponnese University (NURPELUNIV), who truly made an impressive effort to facilitate the EEC in the evaluation process also considering that they were informed about the visit three weeks prior to it. The NURPELUNIV Department contributed whole-heartedly to the evaluation process with professionalism, honesty and enthusiasm and the EEC thanks them for their positive attitude and collaboration. The EEC felt well equipped to address the tasks assigned by the H.Q.Q.A. and was able to complete the review effectively and efficiently. The conclusions described below were reached by EEC unanimously.

Description of the Nursing Department of the University of Peloponnese

The NURPELUNIV Department is comprised of 1 Associate Professor, 6 Assistant Professors, 4 Lecturers, an elected faculty member awaiting appointment, 12 members appointed according to PD 407/80 (on the previous year) and further 4 who teach at the PDSP and 2 EEDIP (Ειδικό Διδακτικό Προσωπικό) members and 4 administrative and technical staff. According to the Internal Evaluation Report (IER) in the 2012-2013 winter semester a total of 416 students attended programmes of studies at the Department (358 undergraduate students, 38 postgraduate students and 20 PhD candidates). Of the elected academic staff, four are nurses, while the rest are medical doctors, physiologists, biologists and computer scientists. The bachelor's program at NURPELUNIV is based on 8 semesters

of theoretical and clinical training.

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) has visited:

- the main campus of NURPELUNIV Department
- the library of NURPELUNIV Department
- the Secretariat of NURPELUNIV Department
- the amphitheatre (large lecture theater)
- classrooms
- various laboratories
- the laboratories of nursing skills development
- Sparta General Hospital and the Department premises at the site of the hospital.

The External Evaluation Committee has met with:

- 1) the Rector and the Vice-Rector of the University of Peloponnese (in Athens offices)
- 2) the Head of the NURPELUNIV Department
- 3) the Academic staff of the NURPELUNIV Department (the internal evaluation group, the elected academic staff and some members appointed according to PD 407/80)
- 4) the secretarial staff and librarian
- 5) a group of postgraduate (n=3) and PhD candidates (n=5)
- 6) a group of undergraduate students (n=63)
- 7) a group of graduates of the NURPELUNIV Department (n=2)
- 8) a group of nursing students in clinical placement (that is a module externally funded)
- 9) the Supervisor of Nurses in the Sparta General Hospital
- 10) the academic staff responsible for the Erasmus Program at the NURPELUNIV Department.

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

1. The internal evaluation report of the Nursing Department (2012-2013)
2. The curriculum of the undergraduate studies
3. The internal students satisfaction survey for a module (fundamentals of nursing)

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

collaboration.

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?

All the documentation provided by the NURPELUNIV were relevant and available to the EEC whenever asked. Quality of the documentation was adequate and the evidence was up to date and fully informative. The EEC welcomes the translation of the IER in the English language. The objectives of the internal evaluation have been met by the NURPELUNIV and the EEC recognizes that a great effort was put into the process.

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?
- How were the objectives decided? Which factors were taken into account? Were they set against appropriate standards? Did the unit consult other stakeholders?
- Is the curriculum consistent with the objectives of the Curriculum and the requirements of the society?
- How was the curriculum decided? Were all constituents of the Department, including students and other stakeholders, consulted?
- Has the unit set a procedure for the revision of the curriculum?

Undergraduate curriculum

The goals of the current undergraduate Curriculum as mentioned in the report are:

- Cultivation and promotion of knowledge concerning the benefit of nursing services, and providing students with essential skills to complete their training and prepare them for a scientific and professional career
- Offering postgraduate studies with appropriate scientific training and expertise in specific subject areas of the Department
- Offering a scientific curriculum in conjunction with the requirements of high quality nursing services and the use of new technologies.

The Faculty has a curriculum committee which oversees the development and approval of the curriculum to meet the standards of the European Union directives for nursing education and the legal framework of the Greek Ministry of Education. The committee consists of academic staff and a student's representative. Their proposals are reviewed and approved by the departmental management committee ('sinelefsi').

The objectives of the curriculum are clearly stated in the internal evaluation report (IER) of the NURPELUNIV Department. The objectives are:

- the effective promotion and exploration of nursing methods and techniques for the promotion and assurance of the quality of life in health and disease,
- rationalization and financial exploitation, so that the implementation of an integrated system in all aspects of nursing management in Greece is achieved,
- promotion of the modern sector of Nursing Management with the use of new technologies.

Broadly, the curriculum meets the criteria of the European Directive for nursing education. The adoption of the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) makes it flexible, promoting the international academic and vocational recognition of the qualifications awarded by the NURPELUNIV Department.

The revision of the curriculum is the responsibility of the appropriate committee.

The NURPELUNIV Nursing Department's goals are somewhat implemented by the curriculum and with relative concordance with the required international nursing standards. The curriculum is clearly articulated, combining theory and practice. Often there are difficulties in implementing the clinical elements of the programme (resulting from the small range of areas of practice available in the local hospital alongside with small number of nursing faculty members in the department to undertake clinical teaching) and more emphasis is given to the theoretical elements over clinical practice. There is a plethora of optional/elective subjects and the goals and objectives of the department are quite wide and cannot clearly be reflected in the curriculum. The EEC is of the view that the curriculum needs to become more nursing centred.

IMPLEMENTATION

- How effectively is the Department's goal implemented by the curriculum?
- How does the curriculum compare with appropriate, universally accepted standards for the specific area of study?
- Is the structure of the curriculum rational and clearly articulated?
- Is the curriculum coherent and functional?
- Is the material for each course appropriate and the time offered sufficient?

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

The NURPELUNIV Department's goals are implemented by the curriculum in accordance with the international nursing standards. The curriculum is clearly articulated although it is important to clarify its structure and function, combining appropriate nursing oriented theory and practice. The EEC would welcome a more nursing-centric restructured curriculum. While overall the program is appropriate, the EEC has identified a few areas in the curriculum that may require improvement. For example, there is not a clearly documented strategy to identify areas of subject overlapping. The EEC has also identified weaknesses in the area of nursing research methodology and the absence of a research project at the undergraduate level. In specific, the research methods module does not incorporate qualitative methods, and while it provides basic knowledge on quantitative methods, the link with the nursing practice remains unclear; this was also evident from the discussion with the students.

During the discussions with the faculty members, it was evident that access to clinics for the students' clinical training is limited. The Sparta General Hospital is small in size with limited specialised clinics. The absence of psychiatric wards and intensive care unit alongside the under-utilised paediatric ward are clearly limiting the experiential learning and exposure of students to these areas of clinical practice. The EEC strongly suggests to the faculty to explore opportunities to collaborate with other larger (ideally University) hospitals in the geographical area and create additional and more enhanced opportunities for clinical practice. For example, the local hospital has 8 medical-surgical wards, while the General Hospital of Tripoli (nearest large hospital to Sparta) has 22 wards, 4 specialised units and psychiatric unit. Alongside these, there is also a large psychiatric hospital in Tripoli as well as the 411 Military Hospital.

All staff are qualified to implement the curriculum effectively.

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?

The EEC believes that the current curriculum is partially achieving the department's goals and objectives. The EEC believes that it is not adequately nursing centred and it is fragmented and at times lacking coherence. The department's goals and objectives should be clearly defined and the curriculum should be revised accordingly. Nevertheless, it is important to mention that many students expressed that they are enjoying the course and

they are learning effectively despite the resource limitations outlined above (access to specific hospital wards and wider clinical exposure).

IMPROVEMENT

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

The Department should formally evaluate its goals and engage with the students to discuss issues for improvement in an effort to improve the access to a variety of wards in clinical practice. The EEC is confident that issues are appropriately identified and a strategic plan would be implemented. The Nursing Department has an annual internal evaluation process which the EEC feels that it is an adequate evaluation mechanism.

B. Teaching

APPROACH:

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

The EEC believes that there is a defined pedagogic policy with regards to teaching approaches and methodology in the NURPELUNIV Department. This is evident from the IER of the NURPELUNIV Department, its formal and informal curricula activities and the discussions the EEC had with faculty members and the students. The results of these policies culminate in the production of skillful graduates who are appropriately and adequately prepared for nursing practice.

Please comment on :

- Teaching methods used

A variety of teaching methods are used including lectures, discussions, e-classes and interactive skills workshops. Such methods support the learning objectives in all domains (cognitive, psychomotor and affective). There is, however, an over-reliance on face-to-face lectures.

- Teaching staff/student ratio

According to the IER the elected staff/student ratio is 1:30 (12 staff: 358 students), showing adequacy of resources, considering that further 4 faculty members will be appointed

in the near future.

Discussions with the students and our own observation of clinical practice indicate adequacy of human resources as the ratio is 1:5.

A significant number of PhD students (20 members) currently exist in the department from various health and social care disciplines who participate in the delivery of lectures related to their subject expertise.

- Teacher/student collaboration

The EEC's observations and discussions with staff and students in clinical practice indicated the availability of clinical mentors which is an excellent resource linking academic work and clinical practice. Students confirmed that the faculty staff are very supportive of their learning and were very praiseworthy of their commitment to teaching nursing and their passion for nursing education overall. It was evident in meetings that staff-students' relationships are respectful, promoting a professional and effective learning environment.

- Adequacy of means and resources

The EEC believes that resources are adequate. Overall the University teaching buildings (completed three years ago) are fit for purpose with suitable classrooms, with flexible seating arrangements which enable small group discussions to take place. There is disabled access throughout. Office accommodation is adequate. The Hospital premises allocated to the Department are also convenient and efficient. There is an emphasis on developing high-tech labs that are not really nursing-related, while the nursing skills lab although functional it is however basic. There should be an investment on increasing the nursing labs' quantity and quality and then, if funds are available, to consider developing additional non-nursing labs that are serving strategic goals of the department and reflecting its critical mass (rather than been based on individual preferences only). Also non-nursing labs should have a more visible link or relationship with applications to teaching nursing theory and practice.

- Use of information technologies

There is an electronic/digital support platform for learning and studying skills. Students have reliable regular access to the World Wide Web. The e-class support needs to be further expanded (or even used in some cases). It is also important to mention that some students complained about the library opening hours which are from 8.30 am- 3.00pm. The EEC recommends that the library should remain operational during afternoon and evening hours, allowing studying flexibly.

- System of written exams

The examination system determined by the Ministry of Education heavily relies on written exams (i.e. at the end of the semester). Other methods of assessment that have been used include oral exams and presentations that fully promote the principles of adult education and allow assessment of critical thinking. Written assignments should be used more widely and less passive learning methods, need to be embraced (e.g. critical case reviews or reflective diaries and teaching methods that enable reflective and evidence-based learning).

IMPLEMENTATION

- Quality of teaching procedures

Internal evaluations indicate that students are satisfied with the teaching procedures.

- Quality and adequacy of teaching materials and resources.

The EEC visited the Faculty's library and found the resources to be adequate. The EEC also reviewed textbooks and teaching materials used in courses and found these to be relevant and appropriate. However, there was a limited number of titles in hard copies. Nevertheless, the library provides a limited number of electronic nursing journals; these need to be enhanced. Overall, the students reported that they were satisfied with the existing electronic literature databases.

- Linking of research with teaching

The NURPELUNIV Department invariably applies research findings in nursing care to teaching and affirms the importance of this link to effective nursing care. However, a dissertation project should be introduced which will facilitate the linkages of theory and evidence-based nursing and research. This does not need to necessarily involve collection of primary data, as it can be an extended literature review, a systematic review, a clinical improvement project or a protocol development project, and can be an individual or a group (more preferably) project.

- Mobility of academic staff and students

The EEC believes that the NURPELUNIV Department has an impressive external profile.

The NURPELUNIV Department values and takes part in European exchange programmes such as ERASMUS, which provide important learning and development opportunities for both staff and students. Staff encourage the students to participate in these activities. The curriculum incorporates English language subjects in order to facilitate mobility to European countries if students wish to participate in ERASMUS.

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

The academic teaching is evaluated by the students every year through the use of a structured questionnaire developed by HQA. The students were satisfied with the nature of the curriculum, the Faculty support and eagerness of staff to advice and help. The student feedback for the Fundamentals of Nursing subject (which was randomly selected) is very positive. The students commented in three areas: content, clinical practice and academic support; more than 90% of the students were satisfied with the subject delivery. Less than 8% expressed concerns. The EEC was impressed with the motivation and dedication that the students expressed about their studies during the meeting.

RESULTS

- Efficacy of teaching

The EEC concluded that the NURPELUNIV Department academic staff and clinical mentors are very effective teachers of nursing theory and practice. Students achieved high marks in all subjects as well as in clinical practice. This was evident by the feedback received from students as well as information provided by the staff. The goals and objectives of the curriculum are met effectively and efficiently.

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

High percentage of students achieved very high marks which confirm the high quality of teaching provided.

- Differences between students and the time to graduation and final degree grades

Completion time should be a minimum of 4 years and most students graduate from the course within this time frame.

- Whether the NURPELUNIV Department understands the reasons of such positive

and negative results

The NURPELUNIV Department have concerns about the constrains that the size of the hospital have on the nature of the student experience in clinical practice and recognize the need for students to seek other more complex training opportunities in larger facilities.

IMPROVEMENT

- Does the Department propose methods and ways for improvement?

The EEC has established that the Faculty has an ongoing monitoring process for the continuous improvement of the quality of education. The NURPELUNIV Department acknowledges the need to establish collaborations with larger health care providers in the area to enhance learning experience offered to students during clinical placements. Nevertheless, it is recognised that the current size of the Sparta General Hospital offers to students a 'hands-on' approach to clinical training which is unlikely to be offered at larger health care facilities. The EEC recommends a combination of the two approaches regarding the clinical training of the students.

- What initiatives does it take in this direction?

The department is in the process of exploring the opportunities offered locally and regionally to enhance the quality of the clinical training provided to students.

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 EEC would like to congratulate the staff efforts to pursue research in health related areas. Despite a significant number of publications being produced on a yearly basis, the Department's policy and main objectives for research seem to be highly individualized. The Nursing Department does not currently have a published research policy although staff recognise the need to develop a team research strategy. The EEC also struggled to find the relevance of some research activity to nursing practice although it appreciates the usefulness of multi-professional research. Research in the department should demonstrate more clearly

its application to nursing. Also, at times there was a tendency to publish to the same 1-2 journals (also not of very high quality ones), rather than submitting manuscripts for publication in an extended number of relevant and higher quality outlets.

- Has the Department set internal standards for assessing research?

The EEC did not document any internal standards, described through collective agreement/action for assessing either the quality of research projects, their impact or their alignment with nursing and other disciplines.

IMPLEMENTATION

- How does the Department promote and support research?
- Quality and adequacy of research infrastructure and support.
- Scientific publications.
- Research projects.
- Research collaborations.

The Department promotes and supports research among students through offering research methods classes, promoting evidence based practice in clinical subjects and encouraging students to attend and present work at conferences and other local events. However, unlike other nursing departments in Greece and abroad, students do not pursue a graduate research project and therefore they may have limited opportunity to practice the research skills acquired through the research methods subjects. The EEC recognises there are constraints associated with the size of the local hospital, which is small in size and may offer limited opportunities for primary data research. However, systematic reviews of the literature and meta-analyses on nursing-centred subject areas (among other options as mentioned earlier) provide an opportunity to critically review and summarise the evidence in an area of nursing practice and ultimately promote evidence based practice.

Research methods classes are highly biased towards quantitative research although there is some input on qualitative research. According to University mandates, there is no protected time for research activities for staff. This is compounded by inadequate funding and an inappropriately heavy workload including teaching, clinical supervision, and administrative work. Overall, there is limited infrastructure and support for research and production of high impact scientific publications. Despite such restrictions, the quantity of

publications is adequate and the quality is comparable to other institutions abroad. Nevertheless, some of the research currently conducted in the Department has limited relevance to current (wider) nursing practice. It is also impressive that the Department pursues external funding for research in collaboration with other Universities whereas some members of staff with common research interests collaborate and pursue externally funded research. However, there are no clear research themes and these should be defined if staff wishes to pursue research in the future in a more organised, programmatic and strategic way.

The department has an impressive number of 20 PhD students from nursing, psychology and social work. This allows the development of a multi-professional research community which is reflective of the current clinical and academic practice abroad. The Department is also running a Master's programme which seems to be successful (as judged from the very positive comments from the students, wider student engagement and output) and can be a source of good quality research and publication output. However, while we have not examined in detail the Master's programme, it would be worth initiating an external review of this programme after its first couple of years of running, potentially with some changes made to the focus (currently combining Administration of health services and Management of –health- crises) and also the balance of the subject list between the key components of the programme. It should also provide specific aims of the programme which should be clearly reflected in its content and structure and clarifies how this is a leading (and more unique) programme in the country than others.

RESULTS

- How successfully were the Department's research objectives implemented?
- Scientific publications.
- Research projects.
- Research collaborations.
- Efficacy of research work. Applied results. Patents etc.
- Is the Department's research acknowledged and visible outside the Department?
Rewards and awards.

Staff advocate evidence-based practice and current research is guiding undergraduate teaching. Staff members encourage postgraduate students to publish their work in scientific journals or present their work in scientific conferences. Members of the Faculty attend regularly scientific national and international congresses and workshops. Externally funded

research is limited but the EEC recognises the wider funding constraints and staff time limitations to put forward grant proposals.

While the level of research activity is commendable, there is limited evidence of research leadership. The overall positive outward profile of the Nursing Department is currently poor and should strategically develop more active research alliances and multi-disciplinary collaborations and seek more external research funding.

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

IMPROVEMENT

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

Both the EEC and the Department recognize the urgent need to develop a strategic research plan with short-, medium- and long-term goals. Desired outcomes include increasing the volume of external research funding and establishing a Departmental Research and Ethics Committee. This is of particular importance considering that staff and students of this department are pursuing health care related research. The familiarization of students with research methodologies from as early as possible in the curriculum through to postgraduate level education should be a priority of the Department's research education strategy. The postgraduate program is a significant asset for the promotion and maintenance of research activity within the Department and should be further encouraged. The EEC would also recommend the review of the existing research portfolios and promotion of research activity which is highly relevant to nursing practice alongside with more effort in publishing consistently in journals with high impact factor.

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

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

The Nursing Department uses available institutional resources in an effective and efficient way. According to the IER, the EEC's observations and the comments of the students and the academic staff, the facilities of the Nursing Department (e.g. offices, classrooms, laboratories, meeting rooms) are adequate. All staff have single office space. Classrooms are spacious, well-maintained, appropriate and clean, and there is a modern high quality large amphitheatre (lecture theatre) for large group teaching. Labs are good in size, with high quality equipment, although in some cases these remain largely unused due to lack of clinical materials. Administrative procedures operate electronically.

The EEC considers that the library facilities are adequately established. Student access to the library (notwithstanding the limitation related to the library's opening hours mentioned earlier), PCs and free internet is considered to be satisfactory with some improvements necessary.

IMPLEMENTATION

- Organization and infrastructure of the Department's administration (e.g. secretariat of the Department)
- Form and function of academic services and infrastructure for students (e.g. library, PCs and free internet access, student counseling, athletic- cultural activity etc.).

The EEC concluded that secretariat support in the Nursing Department is adequate as it is staffed by 4 persons who provide administrative services to 11 elected faculty members, and 416 students across the four years of study.

Athletic/leisure facilities are minimal, although students can use the related town facilities. Dining facilities are adequate, however, comments from the students indicate that neither the free dining service nor the quality of the food are adequate. While the former is regulated by the state and it applies to students across the country, the latter seems to be a local issue that needs immediate attention by the Faculty.

RESULTS

- Are administrative and other services adequate and functional?
- How does the Department view the particular results?

It is the view of the EEC based on observations and the faculty and students' comments that administrative and other services are both functional and adequate.

IMPROVEMENTS

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

- Initiatives undertaken in this direction.

The work of the administrative staff is vital for the effective functioning of the Nursing Department. Often it seems that administrative staff operate beyond the call of duty, showing an exemplary caring attitude towards the students. Some communication problems and work liaising are evident between administrative staff and academics, and this needs to be addressed by the senior management of the department.

Collaboration with social, cultural and production organizations

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

Overall the EEC is impressed with the quality, originality and significance of the Nursing Department's external initiatives. The commitment of the Faculty members is commendable. The students are also very keen to engage with voluntary work and have an impact on the health of the citizens in the region and beyond. An excellent example, for which students have been honoured, is the use of theatre as a means of promoting health and health education messages to the community in the region. Some topics of student work include child abuse or anorexia. Students are encouraged to organize and participate in several health education activities (lectures, leaflets). The region has some unique opportunities for student learning and social engagement, such as malaria management education. Master's level students have volunteered their time to work in Africa. The social responsibility of the Nursing Department is enhanced with the above activities, although a more concrete and formal strategy for social responsibility within the Department will enhance the Department's profile further.

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 the above inhibiting factors.
- Short-, medium- and long-term goals.
- Plan and actions for improvement by the Department/Academic Unit

- Long-term actions proposed by the Department.

The EEC concludes that the rigid rules governing university education in Greece do not contribute to high quality education and limit the creativity, enthusiasm and outcomes of the department. There is a clear need for a wider strategy for the future of the department and discussions around this at all management levels also involving students. There is very little strategic planning and agreed goals in the department. Some of these strategic discussions need to take place at the University of Peloponnese senior management level. The department is part of a School of human movement and quality of life sciences, and is housed together with the department of sports management. These two disciplines do not fit comfortably together, and they have different educational goals. The creation of a School of Health Sciences would have been more preferable and appropriate. The optimal clinical training of students needs some careful re-evaluation and a new, more effective, model of clinical learning arrangements.

The question of whether the physical base of the department should be in Sparta or in a place with a larger tertiary hospital, particularly Tripoli, was raised by the EEC. The current (or most optimal) geographical location of the department needs some concrete discussion among the staff members, as currently no such discussion has taken place with the result being that each faculty member has his/her own views on the matter. The Department needs a commonly-agreed view on the matter.

However, it is recognised that a significant investment has taken place in the site of the School with a new building (3 years old now) with great space and facilities, creating a sense of mini-campus for the students and staff alike. The new faculty appointments are welcomed and will enhance the quality of teaching and the delivery of a high quality programme of studies.

- Proposals on ways to overcome the above inhibiting factors.
- Short-, medium- and long-term goals.
- Plan and actions for improvement by the Department/Academic Unit
- Long-term actions proposed by the Department.

The Nursing Department has very few goals for the future. These include:

- Short-term proposed actions include:
 - Appointment of new staff members (Note: already done with 4 new appointments recently)
 - Further promotion of the Erasmus programme
 - Medium-term proposed actions include:
 - Further promotion of lifelong learning
 - Improvements in international collaborations.

However, these seem to be more inspirational in nature and limited, as there is no concrete plan of how these can be achieved.

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

The EEC members feel that the decision to create a university department of nursing in Sparta was an unfortunate and unjustified (political) decision with limited sense to the wider nursing community. Having said that, over the past 8 years the faculty members have provided high quality teaching and learning, are now housed in a new building and are offering a variety of learning and scholarship opportunities to the (high calibre) students that are part of the department.

The EEC was very impressed with the excellent calibre and motivation of the Nursing Department staff's performance, enthusiasm and commitment across teaching and learning. Equally the EEC was impressed with the passionate and dedicated nursing students. The Nursing Department has a clear and determined focus and desire to achieve the highest possible standards in nursing education in Greece.

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

1. the enthusiastic and dedicated staff who provide education of the highest possible standards in Greece;
2. positive staff-student relationships based on trust, professionalism and respect, support and nurturance, cooperation, loyalty, enthusiasm and determination, despite the current economic climate;
3. the dedicated academic staff;
4. the recognition and appreciation of the students towards the efforts made by their teachers and their support in general;

The EEC strongly supports one-level nursing education at Universities only, in line with international nursing education standards. This department is the 2nd only university department in the country, and should be an example of the further development of university departments in Greece. Students are trained with a strong theoretical preparation and leadership skills. This is a leading nursing department in the country.

The EEC found a high level of consistency in the information provided between the IER, the department discussions, the various visits and other Departmental meetings, as well as the meetings with the nursing students, over the time of the evaluation period. However, there was a great disparity in the voices that concern the major issues of the department's strategic direction, physical base and its future among staff, with no common view across the majority of the staff.

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

It is recommended that;

- 1. Members of faculty staff with a background in nursing should be the majority in a department of nursing as they are more appropriately equipped to train and educate students of their own profession.**
- 2. Develop a clear strategic plan for student clinical education. This should also include a clear and comprehensive assessment plan of student practice and enhance the clinical experience of the students.**
- 3. Clinical nursing training should be improved, and the use of tertiary hospitals in the region should be seriously considered in a more concrete manner in order to improve clinical nursing training.**
- 4. Clinical nursing skills labs should be equipped with a wider range and more up to date nursing and medical equipment used in everyday practice. The use of simulators for skills training should be seriously considered.**
- 5. Consider a higher investment on and incorporation of e-learning opportunities in the training and learning of students, and develop interactive online courses.**
- 6. Develop a concrete strategy for the future of the department for the next 5 years (and beyond) with short-, medium-, and long-term goals.**
- 7. Develop clear research strategic plans with specific deliverables.**
- 8. Focus on restructuring the curriculum with emphasis on a clear philosophy, conceptual model and mission of the programme and use of**

an acceptable and more nursing-centric model (ie. Systems-based or symptoms-based etc) and a model that has more visible applications in nursing.

Some suggestions include:

- 8.1 Qualitative research methodologies must be included within all research modules as well as mixed method approaches;
 - 8.2 Significantly decrease the number of elective subjects offered by the department, as there is no need nor good justification for the presence of a high number elective subjects (many of them also are nursing-related that should have been part of the compulsory subjects); also make sure that some of these electives reflect broader university education and can be taken by other departments or schools at the University;
 - 8.3 Some subjects could merge, avoiding duplication and repetition, such as Pathology and Pathological Nursing or Surgery and Surgical Nursing or Psychiatry and Mental Health Nursing or Paediatrics and Paediatric Nursing with a focus on nursing related content. Anatomy & Physiology should be taught either in a more integrated way or at least in parallel;
 - 8.4 Develop and incorporate a dissertation/project option in the curriculum;
 - 8.5 Eliminate some basic/medical science modules that are less important at this stage of the students' development and replace them with more nursing-relevant content. Such examples may include biochemistry, biophysics, molecular biology, etc.;
 - 8.6 Evidence-based practice needs to be a framework across nursing modules and be taught sufficiently;
- 9. It appears there is no formal process of consultation with other stakeholders in the community, although such discussions may have taken place on an informal basis due to the excellent relations the department has demonstrated with the various stakeholders, including clinical staff and students. This needs to be formalised.**
- 10. Make better use of existing and new collaborations with national and international institutions, focussing on joint research and scholarly activities.**
 - 11. The Nursing Department or the wider Faculty should establish a Human Research Ethics Committee as a priority for the oversight and decision-making of all research in the Department.**
 - 12. The University of Peloponnese needs to have a strategic discussion with its senior management team with regard to the Faculty constitution and**

structure. The two departments in the faculty seem largely unrelated and their co-existence in the same Faculty is insufficient. A Faculty of Health Sciences would have been a more appropriate structure for a health related subject such as nursing. By establishing a new Faculty structure with health related disciplines, this can allow better resource allocation and sharing of resources among the departments as well as create opportunities for collaboration and growth. The EEC believes that the current Faculty structure, consisting of a Nursing Department and a Sports Management department is not optimal.

- 13. The University/Department should consider the most appropriate physical base for the Department and develop a departmental-wide common view on this matter. Options may include maintaining the current base in Sparta but clinical training is re-arranged in the curriculum and provided in other regional hospitals alongside that of Sparta General Hospital or a complete relocation closer to a large tertiary hospital, such as Tripoli. Establishing an optimal educational environment which provides appropriate academic and clinical training to nurse students should inform future decisions on this matter.**

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

Members of the Committee

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