



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ

HELLENIC REPUBLIC

**Α.ΔΙ.Π.**

**H.Q.A.A.**

ΑΡΧΗ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ

HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY

ΑΝΩΤΑΤΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ

FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

## **EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT**

DEPARTMENT OF PHILOLOGY

UNIVERSITY OF PELOPONNESE

13<sup>th</sup> December 2011

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### **External Evaluation Committee**

The Committee responsible for the External Evaluation of the Department of Philology of the University of Peloponeese consisted of the following four (4) expert evaluators drawn from the Registry constituted by the HQAA in accordance with Law 3374/2005 :

1. Prof. Dr. Ulrich Moennig (Co-ordinator)

University of Hamburg

2. Prof. Dr. Yoryia Agouraki

University of Cyprus

3. Prof. Dr. Dr. h. c. Konstantinos A. Dimadis

Free University of Berlin

4. Dr Charalambos Dendrinis

Royal Holloway, University of London

**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?**

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) visited the University of Peloponnese, Department of Philology, between Monday 5<sup>th</sup> December and Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2011.

#### **Day 1: Monday 5<sup>th</sup> December 2011**

On arrival at the HQ of the Chancellery of the University in Tripolis on 5<sup>th</sup> December at 5pm the EEC was received by the Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Konstantinos Masselos, and the Directrice of the Department of Philology Prof. Georgia Xanthaki-Karamanou. The EEC was warmly welcomed and was briefed on the history, identity and structure of the University in general, and of the Department of Philology in particular. Prof. Moennig explained the aims and responsibilities of the EEC and confirmed with Prof. Xanthaki-Karamanou the schedule of its planned meetings with members of academic and administrative staff and students. Other details concerning accommodation and transportation arrangements were also briefly discussed.

The EEC was then directly transported to the Department of Philology in Kalamata. On its arrival (at 7pm) the EEC was received by the Dean of the School of Humanities and Cultural Studies, Prof. Eurydice Antzoulatou-Retsila, and was led to the Departmental Meeting Room where it was formally welcomed by Prof. Xanthaki-Karamanou in the presence of the Dean (as previously arranged with the EEC) and a good number of senior and junior academic staff, some of whom were also members of the Internal Evaluation Committee (IEC). The students' representative in the IEC was also present. Following introductions, Prof. Moennig presented the aims of the EEC and the evaluation procedures to those present. A discussion followed concerning general and specific points raised in the Internal Evaluation Report (IER) of November 2010, taking into consideration the Undergraduate Prospectus (Οδηγός Σπουδών) 2009-2010. The topics included the aims, resources, structure and effectiveness of both the Department and the curriculum, teaching materials, teaching and learning methods and outcomes, formal assessment, evaluation of courses, and the research profile of the Department. The important issue concerning the close links between the Department of Philology and the Department of History, Archaeology and Cultural Resources Management (HACRM), especially in terms of shared teaching and infrastructure, was repeatedly stressed.

The meeting closed with a discussion on the needs and priorities of the Department of Philology concerning its development in the immediate and near future as proposed in the IER. Prof. Moennig thanked all present for their

contribution to the discussion and explained the way the External Evaluation Procedure (EEP) would take place in the following two days. The EEP would include interviews with members of academic and administrative staff, discussion with students either individually or in groups, usually in classes, with the permission of their teachers, who would be requested to leave the room in order to allow students to express views freely and without pressure; visits to facilities (library, refectory, IT Rooms and labs), accompanied by appropriate staff; and consultation by the EEC of a variety of documents including students essays, exam papers, course evaluation questionnaires, the revised curriculum according to the Undergraduate Prospectus (Οδηγός Σπουδών) 2011-2012, and the Departmental Class Timetable of the current academic term (Πρόγραμμα Διδασκαλίας Χειμερινού Εξαμήνου ακαδημαϊκού έτους 2011-2012).

During the discussion, packed with information, a variety of views and positions were expressed and clarified. The meeting lasted until 9.30pm. Subsequently, the EEC met to briefly discuss the issues raised during the previous meeting with the Department and prepared itself for the meetings to be carried out in the following two days.

### **Day 2: Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2011**

On Tuesday 10<sup>th</sup> December the EEC visited the academic and administrative buildings of the Department of Philology in Kalamata (at 9.15am). The Dean explained that due to a planned meeting of the Chancellery the next day –to discuss, among other issues, important matters concerning the Department of Philology–, both she and the Directrisse would be grateful if the EEC would be prepared to discuss any matters it felt that would be necessary during the day, instead of the planned meeting the next day. It was pointed out that efforts were made to postpone the meeting of the Chancellery for another day to avoid a clash with the EEC's visit. The EEC agreed to this request.

The day's programme started with a full and detailed (Power Point) presentation of the aims, physiognomy and activities of the Department by the Directrisse at an open meeting held in the University auditorium in the presence of students and staff. During and after the presentation the EEC had the opportunity to raise specific questions to the Speaker and the audience concerning academic and other issues (e.g., the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System [ECTS], and participation in the Erasmus programme).

This session (which lasted until 10.30am) was particularly useful as it gave an overall picture of the Department's current stage of development as well as short- and long-term plans. The substantial support received from the local community and private donors in the process of setting up the School and creating its infrastructure was emphasized. The presentation was accompanied by a first meeting with undergraduate and postgraduate students who were present.

Subsequently, the EEC was offered a guided tour to classrooms, staff offices, labs and the library, the latter consisting of two separate reading rooms located at the far ends of the same building (the second reading room is still under preparation).

Co-ordinated by Prof. Moennig, the EEC proceeded without delay with interviewing (either individually or in groups of two or three) members of staff and a non-established teacher, and visiting classes and most facilities, without interruption, until 9pm. It should be noted that the classes visited were chosen on the grounds of availability according to the Departmental Class Timetable. These included classes in compulsory (CC), elective (EC) and specialisation (SC)

undergraduate courses, such as the Introduction to Byzantine Philology (13K3) (1<sup>st</sup> semester CC), Introduction to Dramatic Poetry: Sophocles (13K23\_11) (3<sup>rd</sup> semester CC), Folk songs – Modern Greek Cypriot Literature (13BNΦ1) (5<sup>th</sup> semester SC), Greek and Roman Mythology and Religion (13E12) (5<sup>th</sup> semester EC), Papyrology–Palaeography–Editing (13E17\_11) (5<sup>th</sup> semester EC). The visits in the classroom, usually conducted towards the middle or the end of the teaching hours, involved discussion with the students in the absence of the teacher who was requested to leave the room. The discussion, in most cases intense and long, mainly concerned curricular and learning experience, examination process, relations with the academic and administrative staff, sufficiency of resources, and career prospects. The discussion was well received by the students who, it must be stressed, had to be encouraged in the beginning to actively participate and freely express opinions, share thoughts and make suggestions. Insofar as the response from staff during the interviews is concerned, this can be characterised by respect and co-operation.

In addition, the EEC discussed with members of the Department of HACRM involved in shared teaching and the shared research unit IRBC (Institute for Research in Byzantine Culture).

During an interview with the Dean, various important issues were discussed with the focus on future prospects of the Department in view of the application of the new Law on Greek Higher Education (No. 4009/6.IX.2011) and the present economic situation in Greece, which is expected to last for the foreseeable future. More specifically, according to this Law, there is no provision for independent Departments. As a result, there will be larger interdisciplinary units (Schools) offering various programmes of studies. It is, therefore, expected that the Department of Philology and the Department of HACRM will cease to exist as independent units. In their place the present School of Humanities and Cultural Studies will be offering programmes of studies in the subjects covered within the School. The EEC was also informed that a discussion has started on whether this School could merge also with the Department of Theatre Studies (based in Nauplion) to form a new School. The rationale behind is to create further synergies in teaching and research. There was also a brief discussion on what the common denominators of these programmes could be.

The EEC then interviewed all Departmental administrative staff and the IT staff in their premises. The discussion involved their responsibilities, working conditions, including working hours and space, relations with students and academic staff.

These visits and interviews were followed by a closed meeting (between 7.30pm-8pm) of the EEC in preparation of its final meeting with the Directrice. In this latter meeting the EEC summarised its preliminary observations and assessment, and discussed, and in some cases clarified, important issues concerning the on-going EEP, such as the curriculum and the application of ECTS. The EEC requested additional documentation on the revised curriculum and the proposed MA programmes in Classical Literature, and in Modern Greek Literature and Cutting-edge Technology (which has already been submitted to the Ministry of Education for approval). Conducted in an atmosphere of trust, the meeting closed at 10pm.

### **Day 3: Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> December 2011**

Following a meeting (at 9.30am) to discuss the remaining tasks of the visit, the EEC returned to the Department (at 10.30am) to continue its work. This included a second visit to the library to clarify some points concerning safety, resources and library opening hours, and to the two IT Labs in order to ascertain the use and state

of PCs and measures taken for their upgrading, and accessibility to internet services. The EEC was also briefed about the two microfilm reader/printers located in one of the two labs. The visit also included further discussion with students ([13K20] Modern Greek Literature, 18<sup>th</sup> century-1930; 3<sup>rd</sup> semester CC) in order to complete the HQAA questionnaire concerning student matters, comprising evaluation of teaching, student participation, student satisfaction from QA procedures in the Department, possibilities and opportunities provided for mobility [e.g., Erasmus], student welfare services, existing departmental infrastructure, library services, quality and comprehensiveness of the curriculum, and possibilities and opportunities provided for practical training, students' relationships with teaching and administrative staff, student's social life within the Department, and general questions on students' choice of the specific discipline, University and Department.

The EEC also held further discussion with staff and collected additional documentation for evaluation, namely the revised curriculum 2011-2012 and the proposed MA programmes in Classical Literature, and in Modern Greek Literature and Cutting-edge Technology, requested the day before, as well as the Undergraduate Prospectus 2011-12.

In addition, at the invitation of the EEC, the Erasmus co-ordinator of the School (responsible for staff and student exchange programmes with UK Universities) briefed the Committee on two recently signed agreements between the Department and the University College London and Royal Holloway, University of London.

The visit closed with a meeting of the EEC to discuss the main points of the External Evaluation. On completion of the discussion the EEC brought the visit to an end. On behalf of the Dean and the Directrice (who were unable to be present due to the meeting at the Chancellery) a senior member of the School thanked the EEC for their visit and their work. Prof. Moennig expressed his thanks on behalf of the EEC for the co-operation of the Department and the School. The EEC then left the premises (at 2.30pm) and returned to Athens.

#### **List of Reports, documents, other data examined by the Committee.**

Apart from the detailed IER of the Department of Philology, the EEC examined a number of reports, brochures, books and documents made available by the Department, including the Undergraduate Prospectus for 2009-2010 (in PDF) and (in the absence of a printed booklet) a printout of the online version of the current Undergraduate Prospectus (2011-2012); a description of the proposed MA programmes (Classical Literature, and Modern Greek Literature and Cutting-edge Technology); evaluation student questionnaires processed; books and articles published by members of staff; marked exam papers and MA dissertations; informative brochures concerning the Institute for Research in Byzantine Culture (IRBC), conferences, colloquia, public lectures and other events, such as the annual Greek Language Summer School.

Additional information was received by a member of the EEC concerning the functioning of the IRBC and the Papyrology and Palaeography Lab. This information was handed to the EEC co-ordinator.

#### **Groups of teaching and administrative staff and students interviewed.**

The EEC interviewed a good number of academic staff, ranging from full Professors to young lecturers and non-established teachers who belong to the Department of Philology, as well as a limited number of members of staff from the Department of HACRM involved into joint activities with the Department of Philology. The EEC

also visited a good number of classes of first- to fourth-year students. Visits to administrative staff in their premises also took place.

#### **Facilities visited by the External Evaluation Committee.**

During the last two days of the visit the EEC visited classrooms, staff offices, the Departmental Meeting Room, the auditorium, the library, two IT labs, the refectory, the administrative offices, the gardens, student kiosks, and toilets.

### II. The Internal Evaluation Procedure

#### **Appropriateness of sources and documentation used.**

The printed and electronic sources and documentation made available to the EEC as part of the EEP was appropriate and mostly up-to-date. Some confusion over the current number of courses (offered in 2011-2012) and the ECTS credited to students, resulted from the fact that the EEC had received the Undergraduate Prospectus 2009-2010 without being informed of the changes introduced in the Undergraduate Prospectus 2011-2012, which was not handed to the EEC in advance. Similarly, changes in the list of members of staff between 2009-2011 were not made known to the EEC in advance. In this way the EEC had to devote time in order to form an accurate picture of the current Departmental staff, research interests and courses offered.

#### **Quality and completeness of evidence reviewed and provided.**

The evidence provided by the Department and reviewed by the EEC was complete and satisfactory both in terms of information and presentation.

#### **To what extent have the objectives of the internal evaluation process been met by the Department?**

The Internal Evaluation Process (IEP) enabled members of the Department to assess the quality of its academic programme and other aspects of its life and activities *vis-à-vis* its aims and objectives, to identify strengths and weaknesses, raise a number of important points concerning its future development, and suggest ways for improvement. In the EEC's view, the IER shows an awareness of the state of this newly established Department, though a more critical and realistic approach would have been desirable with regard to its future development. For example, no mention is made of the fact that heavy teaching commitments by members of staff affect their research output. Neither is the current financial climate in Greece and the introduction of the new Law on Greek Higher Education taken into serious consideration in the Department's plans for the future. Instead, a quite ambitious plan of expansion, including the establishment of new posts and the construction of new buildings, is proposed.

## **A. Curriculum**

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

### **APPROACH**

#### **What are the goals and objectives of the Curriculum?**

The Department of Philology is part of a newly-established University (2003). According to the mission statement of the University, adopted by the Department of Philology, through its curriculum, the Department aims at (i) cultivating and promoting knowledge on classical, modern Greek and non-Greek literature and linguistics, studying

philosophical currents which affect their evolution; (ii) providing students with sound training for their scholarly and professional career; (iii) organising postgraduate studies leading to specialised subjects offered at the Department; (iv) contributing to the study of the influence of Byzantium to the Greek and European culture, and of its elements that form its ecumenical character in the modern world. The IER draws attention to additional clauses concerning more specific employment prospects of the graduates (see item 2.3.5).

#### **What is the plan for achieving them?**

To achieve these goals the Department has designed and been offering (since September 2008) a full-time four-year BA degree programme, which mainly aims at preparing the next generation of school teachers of Classical, Byzantine and Modern Greek History, Language and Literature, particularly in Greek secondary education. At the same time the Department has designed two MA degree programmes as a preparatory stage for doctoral research in relevant areas. It also offers supervision of doctoral theses in the field.

The Department is administering, jointly with the Department of HACRM, the Institute for Research in Byzantine Culture (IRBC) based at Mystra. It also administers two IT labs, one for general use by the students, and one devoted to the application of IT technology in Humanities and in teaching philological courses in secondary education.

In addition, the Department is currently proposing to offer, in collaboration with the Department of HACRM, life-long learning programmes open to all promoting close co-operation with the local community.

#### **How were the objectives decided?**

No information is given in the Undergraduate Prospectuses or the website of the Department concerning the process of decision-making regarding the objectives. The EEC assumes that these, identical with those defined in the Foundation Charter of the Department, were decided by the appropriate Departmental and University bodies and approved by the Ministry of Education.

#### **What factors were taken into account?**

The main factor taken into consideration was the need to train school teachers who would be required to teach *all* of the following subjects to Greek State and private secondary schools: Ancient and Modern Greek Language and Literature, Latin, Greek, Roman and Modern Greek History, and Philosophy. Hence, the inclusion of teaching training courses in the curriculum.

#### **Were they set against appropriate standards?**

It is the view of the EEC that, on paper, the objectives of the curriculum follow appropriate European University standards.

#### **Did the unit consult other stakeholders?**

Though the links between the Department and the University on the one hand and local authorities and community on the other are close, no information is given in the IER (item 6), the Undergraduate Prospectuses or the website of the Department whether the latter, or indeed other stakeholders, were consulted during the consultation process.

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

The present curriculum, consisting of a wide range of courses, is consistent both with the

aims and objectives of the Department as described in the mission statement and with the needs of society. Through its programme of studies students are enabled not only to study Greek history, literature and culture from the Homeric times to the present, but also to learn (in separate dedicated courses) how to apply pedagogy and electronic resources in teaching relevant subjects to pupils, thus contributing to the enhancement of secondary education in Greece, which is much needed at present.

**How was the curriculum decided?**

The curriculum was decided by the appropriate Departmental and University bodies and approved by the Ministry of Education.

**Were all constituents of the Department, including students and other stakeholders, consulted?**

Students took part in the relevant decisions through their representatives in the appropriate Departmental and University bodies.

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

The Department has already revised the original curriculum at least twice. The last changes are reflected in the Undergraduate Prospectus 2011-2012. It seems there is no specific committee regularly reviewing the curriculum (see IER, items 2.4.1-2).

Due to limited space, we can not but concisely refer to the **interuniversity MA in Moral Philosophy** offered by the Department in cooperation with the University of Athens. The impressive acceptance of this MA proves the need for the existence of local universities, given that students attending an MA programma often are persons who already hold full-time positions, e.g. in secondary education. It must be stressed, though, that the MA in Moral Philosophy does not but tangentially meet the aims of the Department. The Department already submitted two MAs in Classical Philology and Modern Greek Philology, respectively. We recommend these MAs to be approved by the Ministry of Education. The need of these MAs, which would meet the aims of the Department, is urgent, given that the members of the staff (junior members more than senior members) must be given the opportunity to teach at a MA level.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

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

It is the view of the EEC that the Department's goals are effectively implemented by the present curriculum, at the expense, however, of a disproportionately high number of courses. Especially first- and second-year students expressed the view to the EEC that this adds increasing pressure in terms of time. The high number of courses inevitably also affects staff in terms of work load.

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

The difficulty is that a comparison of the curriculum of the Department with the respective curricula in other Universities outside Greece and Cyprus would not accurately reflect the degree of standard, since in these two countries these subjects are particularly cultivated as part of their legacy. In addition, the aims, objectives and structure of the curriculum are not always the same.

An important point, however, to which the EEC would like to draw particular attention is that the Department's curriculum is not entirely consistent with the European System

of crediting (ECTS) the appropriate time students ought to devote to individual courses. For, according to this system, the 240 ECTS credits include time necessary for the preparation, attending of classes/lectures/seminars and reading of relevant literature (either in class or individually [homework]), plus formal and informal assessment (oral/written exams, presentations, assignments, coursework, etc.). Though students of the Department are required to devote 7,200 hours of study in order to be credited the required number of 240 ECTS, in reality, from the descriptions of the courses and the interviews the EEC conducted with students, it is clear that the hours actually required in order to digest and substantiate the material critically go significantly beyond the time students are credited in the Department. This affects the standard expected from a University student in terms of the ability to reflect on specific and general points, to exercise critical thinking and to be able to formulate informed argumentation. This inconsistency also affects the transfer of credited courses to and from Universities abroad.

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

Though clearly articulated, the structure of the curriculum reflects an emphasis on Classical Literature at the expense of Linguistics, Byzantine Literature and Modern Greek Studies (including Comparative Literature). In addition, the structure features a broad covering of subjects, which apparently causes the overload noted above. A more selective approach including more focused courses could cure the problem.

**Is the curriculum coherent and functional?**

The curriculum is coherent in terms of subjects included and prerequisites set. Changes applied in the curriculum 2011-2012, namely the decrease of number of courses from 67 to 63, shows that the Department is aware of problems concerning the functionality of the previous curriculum (2009-2010). In addition, the foreign language courses, taught as part of the curriculum 2009-2010, were subsequently removed (in 2011-2012), despite the fact that they are indispensable in undergraduate studies. Though creating serious problems by removing an opportunity for students and future scholars to improve its foreign language skills, this change is coherent with the practice of these courses not being credited at all through ECTS points in the curriculum 2009-2010.

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

The material for each course is appropriate. Insofar the duration of classes is concerned (this is how the EEC understands the question), students expressed the view that the long duration of regular (3-hour) classes prevents, at least the majority of them, from concentrating and digesting the lecture and the material discussed in class, despite the provision of short intervals.

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

This a newly established Department and therefore there is room for expansion and improvement in terms of resources to implement the curriculum. However, the present provision of printed collection, complemented by basic electronic resources located in the library and the two labs, is satisfactory. In addition, there are two microfilm printer/readers for use by staff involved in teaching and research in Papyrology and Palaeography, currently placed in one of the two labs.

The EEC was informed that steps are being taken for the enrichment of the printed book collection in the library, while a number of new PCs equipped with free internet accessibility for students' use have been ordered.

The library and IT staff are qualified and appropriately trained to use these resources. It was pointed out by the students that the photocopier machine in the main building is inadequate and in most cases out of use. The EEC also noted the lack of a scanner for use by the students, which could be used in parallel with, or in the place of, the photocopier machine. The offices of the academic and administrative staff are equipped with the necessary PCs and internet facilities.

## 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?**

The EEC feels that it cannot offer an objective and fair view of the degree of success of the curriculum implemented, for the simple reason that no examination for the selection of school teachers has been organized by the Supreme Council for Civil Personnel Selection (ΑΣΕΠ) since 2009, when the first graduates of the Department completed their studies. Similarly, the two MA degree programmes designed by the Department in order to prepare students for doctoral research have not yet been approved. Hence, the EEC is unable to comment. So far, the Department has produced two doctoral theses, while two more are nearing completion.

Of the two IT Labs, the one used for training students in the application of IT technology in Humanities and in teaching philological courses in secondary education is of high standard, properly and sufficiently supported, and is safely secured. The two microfilm printer/readers for use by staff involved in teaching and research in Papyrology and Palaeography, currently placed in the other Lab, though in perfect condition, are not used due to bureaucratic reasons, namely the Department is still expecting authorization of its use as a Lab by the Ministry of Education.

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

The Department is aware of these reasons.

## IMPROVEMENT

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

In joint and individual discussions with the Dean, the Directrice and members of staff the EEC realized that there is an on-going discussion concerning possible ways that the Curriculum should be improved, particularly with relation to the high number of courses taught, which inevitably affects teaching and work load.

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

The Department is currently discussing ways of dealing with this problem by introducing further changes in the curriculum (including abrogation and merging of courses, as indeed happened in the past) and applying to the Ministry for the establishment of further teaching posts to cover teaching needs.

## ***B. Teaching***

### APPROACH:

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

**Teaching methods used.**

The Department employs to a large extent traditional methods of teaching, consisting of delivery of lectures in classes with students keeping notes, at the same time encouraging discussion. This is followed by individual study (at home) from a textbook distributed to students free of charge in the beginning of the semester. In addition, the course syllabus is accessible to students online through the eClass system, while tutors' notes for each course are available in the library.

The application of IT technology in Humanities and in teaching philological courses in secondary education is another tool employed by the Department, which enhances its methodological approach.

Emphasis is placed on text-based teaching in philological courses, in the sense that students are required to learn and explore specific texts, on which they are examined as part of formal assessment.

**Teaching staff/ student ratio.**

According to numbers communicated by the Department the teaching of 264 (undergraduate) students registered with the Department of Philology in 2009-2010 was conducted by 9 members of academic staff and a number of non-established teachers of the Department of Philology, complemented by members of academic staff and non-established teachers belonging to the Department of HACRM. Currently, 362 undergraduate students correspond to 10 members of academic staff (one being on leave). The teaching staff/student ratio, therefore, is 1 member of staff for every 36 students (not taking into account non-established teachers and members of academic staff belonging to the Department of HACRM, who also contribute to the teaching of the Department). There are special contracts for those who teach in the MA programme.

**Teacher/student collaboration.**

In the discussions with students it became clear to the EEC that the level of collaboration between teachers and students is high. Members of academic staff were described by students generally as approachable and consistently ready to offer their help. Closer collaboration takes place during the composition of the BA thesis, conducted under the supervision of a member of staff chosen by the student.

**Adequacy of means and resources.**

The Department has adequate means and resources for teaching, including large classrooms, a large auditorium for lectures, the library, and two IT Labs.

**Use of information technologies.**

The Department makes good use of IT in teaching. As mentioned above, it offers special courses in the application of IT technology in Humanities and in teaching philological courses in secondary education.

**Examination system.**

Students are assessed by written exams in the end of the semester and by written coursework (essays and BA thesis). It should be stressed that in the case of philological courses, texts are often dictated to students in class.

**IMPLEMENTATION**

**Quality of teaching procedures.**

The Department follows standard teaching procedures. The EEC observed that there is room for more active involvement of the students both in class and homework.

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

The library facilities, student notes and general teaching materials and resources are adequate for the implementation of the curriculum. It should be noted that the current PC facilities open to the students for private use in one of the Labs are problematic, as most of PCs are damaged or infected by viruses as a result of the specific Lab not being supervised or securely locked. The Department informed the EEC that this Lab is in the process of being upgraded. It is hoped that it will be also securely supervised and properly maintained.

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

The course material is by and large satisfactory and would benefit from a more thorough exposure to recent discourses. More full and systematic use of the eClass system would enhance teaching and learning experience. In this respect a scanner for staff would permit a more efficient distribution of updated material to the students.

**Linking of research with teaching.**

A good attempt is being made to inform teaching with research. The introduction of the proposed MA programmes will undoubtedly enhance this aspect of teaching and learning.

**Mobility of academic staff and students.**

The Department has recently established links with other Universities in the EU, including through the Erasmus staff and student exchange programme. The Erasmus co-ordinator (for UK Universities) reported that the first students will participate in this programme in the next academic year.

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

The EEC received processed QA student anonymous questionnaires. Bearing in mind that no mention is made on these questionnaires of the ratio between the number of students who were required to complete and submit the form, and that of students who actually submitted the completed form, the following remarks reflect the best possible picture of student satisfaction.

Students expressed impressively high appreciation of the quality of teaching, including the supervision of written coursework. Insofar as course content and study material/resources are concerned, students find them satisfactory.

The question “How do you judge the number of teaching units with relation to work load?” in the questionnaire (pp. 4ff, item 13) is not clear to the EEC members. It would make better sense for the evaluation of teaching in this case if “teaching units” were to be replaced by “ECTS units” to reflect the value of course work in relation to the credits awarded.

**RESULTS****Efficacy of teaching.**

The EEC holds the view that largely speaking the covering of the material is considered by the Department as a matter of priority in the teaching/learning process often at the

expense of critical thought and discussion, crucial elements for the training of future teachers in secondary schools and indeed future academics. This deficiency increases by the fact that attendance of lectures is not compulsory for students. Consequently, for those who prefer to be absent (occasionally representing a substantial percentage of registered students) the possibility for discussion on both the material and more general issues is limited.

**Discrepancies in the success/failure percentage between courses and how they are justified. Differences between students in (a) the time to graduation, and (b) final degree grades.**

From the IER's lists of students examined per course it is evident that in general, a considerable number of candidates fail the exams; a high percentage of students attending introductory compulsory courses (taught in large classes) do not sit the exam; and candidates examined in specialisation and elective courses (taught in medium-size and small groups) tend to have a higher success rate. Students achieve a better than average grade in their BA degree.

It should be noted that the figures in the IER Plate 11-2.2 seem to be inconsistent with those in Plate 11-6.2. Nonetheless, the EEC has the impression that the number of students graduating in 2008-2009 and in 2009-2010 (Plate 11-6.1) indicates either a low rate of success or substantial delay in the completion of the degree. This point needs to be ascertained and resolved.

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

The Department's view is that the positive results in student performance are due to the quality of scholarship and teaching by members of academic staff, the wide range of courses offered and the provision of suitable and advanced resources for the implementation of the curriculum.

Members of staff and students expressed the view that a major negative issue affecting the success of the programme of studies is the substantial proportion of absentees in classes. In their view, this is mainly due to practical reasons (job/family commitments, distance between permanent residence and the location of the Department, etc.) rather than extenuating circumstances (sickness, bereavement, etc.) or indeed lack of interest. (Admittedly, this is a general issue, which ought to be addressed by the educational authorities.) The disproportionately high number of courses (commented above, under "Curriculum: Implementation"), which adds to this problem, was also discussed with the Department who showed awareness of it. This subject, however, was left open for further discussion.

**IMPROVEMENT**

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

The Department holds the view that there is urgent need for expansion by establishing further posts to cover teaching and research in Byzantine Literature, Latin Literature, Linguistics, Pedagogics and Philosophy (in this order). Similarly, the Department proposed the need for acquiring or constructing additional premises (including student halls of residence) and acquiring the municipal athletic playground, in order to create a larger Campus.

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

The Department is currently discussing the next moves with the Chancellery in the

broader context of the ongoing discussion on possible merging with other Departments within the University of Peloponnese (namely, the Department of Theatre Studies in Nauplion) and the imminent merging with the Department of HACRM, imposed by the new Law on Greek Higher Education in the new context of Schools. Concerning the physical expansion of the Department, the EEC understands that there is an ongoing discussion with both local authorities and community.

### **C. Research**

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

#### **APPROACH**

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

The Department's policy and main objective in research is the promotion of areas represented by the curriculum and the interests of members of staff through advanced research, both individually and as part of the Institute for Research in Byzantine Culture (IRBC), the establishment of the proposed MA programmes, and establishing further links with other Universities and research centres in Greece and abroad.

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

To the EEC's knowledge, no specific standards for internally assessing the quality and direction of research, have been established.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION**

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

See below, comments on item: "How successfully were the Department's research objectives implemented?"

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

The quality of research infrastructure and support is below average. Hence the need for staff to pursue their research in libraries outside the University.

##### **Scientific publications.**

The standard of publication by members of staff is satisfactory. A number of articles appear in scholarly journals of high standing and a number of monographs have been published in eminent series.

##### **Research projects and collaborations**

The Department needs to pay more attention to collaborative and externally-funded national and international research projects.

#### **RESULTS**

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

The Department needs to show more clearly how cutting-edge research informs the designing and delivery of courses. A more interdisciplinary approach in research would enable members of staff to advance their own areas at the same time contributing to a closer collaboration of scholars and disciplines, thus enhancing both teaching and research as well as the profile of the Department.

The Institute for Research in Byzantine Culture (IRBC) based at Mystra, administered jointly by the Departments of Philology and of HACRM, is presented in the IER (item 3.1.1.1) as "the only Institute for Research in Byzantine Culture". This is inaccurate.

Moreover, the IRBC has a proven record of activities since its founding (in 2007), including two completed research projects on “Byzantine Testaments” and on “Late Byzantine Hagiography” (the latter being interrupted); a conference on “Mystras: Identities and Orientations”; and several lectures and seminars addressed to the academic community and the general educated public; while more activities are foreseen in the near future. It is the hope of the EEC that the IRBC will optimize its activities in order to fully justify its central position in the study of Byzantine History and Culture both in physical and historical terms.

**Scientific publications. Research projects. Research collaborations.**

Please see respective section above (under “Implementation”).

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

So far the research work by members of staff has enabled this newly-established Department to be placed on the academic map. The production of original software in the context of research in the application of IT technology in Humanities and in teaching philological courses in secondary education is noteworthy and promising in this area.

**Is the Department’s research acknowledged and visible outside the Department?**

The Department has taken significant steps for making the research conducted by members of staff known to the academic community through publications and the organizing of, and participation in, lectures, national and international conferences.

**Rewards and awards.**

Members of the Department hold high positions in Greek national committees, including the Association of Philologists, the Greek Linguistic Legacy, and the State Scholarships Foundation (IKY).

**IMPROVEMENT**

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

The Department has proposed the establishment of further links with the international academic community for collaborative research and the introduction of the two MA programmes (in Classical Literature, Modern Greek Literature and Cutting-edge Technology). These will undoubtedly improve its research profile.

The Department also shows commitment in improving its research infrastructure. In this direction it has applied to the University in order to secure funds for the purchase of specialized equipment, the upgrading of existing PCs and, in addition, the establishment of a Phonetics and Phonology Lab to support teaching and research in the Programme of Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies and the Summer School in Modern Greek (run by the Department) (see Undergraduate Prospectus 2011-2012, p. 5, item 3). With the further development of Linguistics (within the School of Humanities and Cultural Studies) a Phonetics and Phonology Lab would undoubtedly place firm foundations for teaching and research in a Programme of Linguistics. The EEC strongly supports this proposal.

***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 Department has commented on the need to improve existing services provided to the academic community (see IER, items 8-10).

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

A large part of administrative procedures is processed electronically. The Department, however, should place greater effort to simplify administrative procedures (including announcement of exam results and various events) through the web and e-mail.

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

There is no specific policy on the part of the Department to attract more students to the Campus. The main reason is that a large section of the student community resides in other cities, including Athens, which makes their travelling to, and staying in, Kalamata expensive. This affects to some extent the atmosphere in the existing Campus.

#### IMPLEMENTATION

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

The Departmental administration is well organized and its infrastructure adequate with the exception of the secretariat's room, which is currently shared with the Department of HACRM's administrative staff; more physical space is clearly needed for the Departmental administrative staff.

It was pointed out repeatedly by both students and staff that the administrative staff is always polite, modest, co-operative, efficient and ready to help.

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

Library opening hours is an important issue raised by students, who suggested longer hours for its use and its opening on Saturday. The need to enrich and upgrade PCs and free internet access has been already pointed out in this report. The lack of student residence halls in Campus is clearly a major deficiency, forcing students either to rent (often costly) private rooms or simply avoid visiting the Campus and attending classes.

Inadequate student counselling is another major issue which should be seriously dealt with by the Department. The establishment of a health and counselling centre within the Campus would be desirable, while the introduction of the "personal tutor" for each student would be an essential first step in resolving urgent issues.

Athletic activity should be further encouraged, especially since a modern athletic playground adjacent to the Department (and owned by the municipality of Kalamata), is in use on a daily basis by members of the community.

Social and cultural life for students who reside in Kalamata is limited to cultural events organised locally.

#### RESULTS

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

The administrative and other services operating within the Campus are adequate and functional. Provision of foreign languages learning courses to members of the administrative staff would enhance both its services and morale.

**How does the Department view the particular results.**

The Department considers that the physical infrastructure and student services should be improved.

**IMPROVEMENTS**

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

The Department has put forward proposals for the improvement of services provided (see IER items 7-9).

**Initiatives undertaken in this direction.**

The Department has applied to the University authorities in order to secure financial support towards the improvement of infrastructure in the aforementioned areas, including the renovation and construction of buildings on Campus and elsewhere (see IER 10).

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

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

The Department is promoting close co-operation with the local community through the organizing of lectures. In this context the Department organizes an annual Summer School in Greek Language and Culture, with the support of the Municipality of Kalamata and the Messenian Diaspora in Canada and USA. It will also be offering life-long learning programmes open to all (see IER, item 6). These activities are significant in building a spirit of mutual trust and collaboration, also creating opportunities for employment to students and members of the community.

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

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

**Please, comment on the Department's:**

**Potential inhibiting factors at State, Institutional and Departmental level, and proposals on ways to overcome them. Short-, medium- and long-term goals. Posts and expansion**

The main inhibiting factor for the proposed expansion of the Department is the current financial climate in Greece and the imminent application of the new Law on Greek Higher Education (see below, "F. Final Conclusions and Recommendations"), which are bound to affect the structure of the School, the place of the Department within the University and its links with other Departments therein.

**Plan and actions for improvement by the Department. Long-term actions**

**proposed by the Department.**

The strategic plan and actions for improvement, including long-term actions, proposed by the Department in the IER should be pursued within the framework of the changes to be brought about by the implementation of the new Law on Greek Higher Education (see below). For this reason a reassessment of the specific proposals should take place by the Department in the light of the forthcoming changes.

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

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

**NB.** The EEC's recommendations below should be considered in the light of the application of the new Law on Greek Higher Education (No. 4009/6.IX.2011) according to which larger interdisciplinary units (Schools) will "replace" independent Departments. These schools will be offering various programmes of studies. As a result the Department of Philology and the Department of HACRM will "merge" to form a School, which may be joined by the Department of Theatre Studies (based in Nauplion) to form a new, stronger School.

**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, including the Department's readiness and capability to change/improve**

**Conclusion:** The Department has succeeded in establishing itself as an academic centre for the diachronic study of Greek Literature, Language and Culture, providing sound training for the new generation of school teachers of secondary education. In close collaboration with the Department of HACRM, and with the support of the administrative staff, the Department of Philology is able to offer a comprehensive and attractive curriculum implemented by its well-trained and dedicated teaching staff.

The Department's proposals for its further development, in terms of new posts and physical space, though justifiable, do not take into serious consideration the changes to be imposed by the new Law on Greek Higher Education and the financial realities in Greece and the opportunities that they entail.

It is the EEC's view that to secure its future viability and progress the Department should merge with the Department of HACRM and the Department of Theatre Studies in Nauplion (which is administered by a provisional administration) to form a new School, under which it will cover its academic and financial needs, building more firm foundations, which will enable it to flourish as part of a larger centre for the study of Hellenism.

**Recommendation:** That the Department,

(a) prepares itself for the imminent merging with the Department of HACRM by discussing in detail with the Dean and all parties involved all necessary academic and administrative issues, in order to secure a smooth transition to the new School

(b) commences formal discussion with the Department of Theatre Studies in Nauplion and the University for the same reason. This Department will be able to cover courses in Byzantine Literature as part of the respective BA and proposed MA programmes at the same time offering new courses, including History of Art, and contributing to lectures and other events (such as the annual Folk Dance Festival) organised in Kalamata.

(c) concentrates on how to best utilise its staff and resources in the new scheme and realities

(d) explores ways of securing external support (provided that there will be no COI).

In addition the EEC recommends that the Department,

(e) secures a post in Byzantine Literature to support teaching and research in this area; the securing this post through the merging with the Department of Theatre Studies is highly probable

(f) establishes a Linguistics Programme within the School of Humanities and Cultural Studies, which will require a new post in Theoretical Linguistics to support the teaching of introductory courses in the core areas of Theoretical Linguistics (i.e., Phonology, Morphology, Syntax and Semantics) within the Programme of Byzantine and Modern Greek Philology.

(g) reduces courses currently offered as part of the Undergraduate curriculum by abrogating or merging, and introduce Seminars

(h) proceeds with the proposed MA Programmes proposed MA programmes in Classical Literature, and in Modern Greek Literature and Cutting-edge Technology

(i) rationalise more teaching, enabling members of academic staff devote more time to research

### **The Department's quality assurance**

**Conclusion:** The IER shows that the Department has paid serious attention to QA matters, thus giving internal and external members the opportunity to assess the Department's present state, its progress in all aspects reviewed and propose short- and long-term plans for its future. This exercise also showed that there is need for a regular internal review of the objectives and their implementation.

**Recommendation:** That the Department establishes a standing committee, consisting of the administration, members of academic staff and representatives of students, to regularly review QA issues in order to secure quality and efficiency.

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