



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ

HELLENIC REPUBLIC

**Α.ΔΙ.Π.**

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ΑΡΧΗ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ

HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE AGENCY

ΑΝΩΤΑΤΗΣ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗΣ

FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

## **EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT**

DEPARTMENT OF PHYSIOTHERAPY

TECHNOLOGICAL EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTE LAMIA.

Version 1.0

October 2011

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### **External Evaluation Committee**

The Committee responsible for the External Evaluation of the Department of Physiotherapy of the Technological Educational Institute of Lamia consisted of the following five (5) expert evaluators drawn from the Registry constituted by the HQAA in accordance with Law 3374/2005:

1. Professor Emeritus Mary Garrett (Coordinator)  
(University College Dublin)
  
1. Dr Maggie Bailey (retired)  
(Keele University)
  
2. Dr Raija Kuisma  
(University of Brighton)
  
3. Professor Roger Soames  
(University of Dundee)
  
4. Dr Tracey Wilkinson  
(Cardiff University)

**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.

## **Introduction**

### Definition of Physiotherapy (World Confederation of Physical Therapy (WCPT))

Physical therapy is concerned with identifying and maximising quality of life and movement potential within the spheres of promotion, prevention, treatment/intervention, habilitation and rehabilitation. This encompasses physical, psychological, emotional, and social wellbeing. Physical therapy involves the interaction between the physical therapist, patients/clients, other health professionals, families, care givers and communities in a process where movement potential is assessed and goals are agreed upon, using knowledge and skills unique to physical therapists (<http://www.wcpt.org/policy/ps-descriptionPT>).

### I. The External Evaluation Procedure

Brief account of the site visit (Monday 10 October to Wednesday 12 October 2011)

- The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) met the President and staff at the Hellenic Quality Assurance Agency (HQAA) to discuss the evaluation process.
- The EEC met to discuss and comment on the Internal Evaluation Report (IER) from the Department of Physiotherapy of the Technological Educational Institute (TEI) Lamia and the Prospectus (ECTS Guide) of the Department.
- The EEC then travelled to Lamia and was met by members of the Department of Physiotherapy.
- The days in Lamia were spent inspecting the various facilities on site, both at the main campus and at the hospital, and meeting with all the appropriate parties detailed below.

Whom did the Committee meet?

- HQAA (Athens)
  - President of the HQAA and staff
- TEI Lamia Site
  - President of TEI Lamia
  - Vice President of TEI and Chair of the local Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP)
  - Head of the Department of Physiotherapy
  - all full time academic staff, some part time academic staff, technical and support staff, library staff, Erasmus coordinator
  - students from various years of the course and their representatives, including Erasmus exchange students, international students and students from other Faculties
  - graduates of the Department undertaking postgraduate studies abroad (through a Skype link)
  - MODIP committee
  - Internal Evaluation Team (IET)

- Clinical Site (General Hospital Lamia)
  - President of the Hospital of Lamia
  - Head of the Hospital Department of Physiotherapy
  - Head of Education for student education and staff Continuing Professional Development
  - members of clinical physiotherapy staff
  - part time lecturers at TEI Lamia supervising students on clinical placements
  - the majority of students on clinical placements at the hospital at the time

List of reports, documents and other data examined by the Committee

- Guidelines for the Members of the External Evaluation Committee
- IER (2009)
- Prospectus (ECTS Guide) (2003)
- Old curriculum course information
- New curriculum course information (2011)
- Library documentation (overview of library facilities, library and information centre documents, information seminars for library users, search results for physiotherapy related journals and books)
- Erasmus Office documentation
- samples of student handbooks and study guides for various courses, including the research dissertation course undertaken in the final year
- wide selection of student final year dissertations
- a range of staff and graduate student MSc/PhD theses
- a range of course textbooks, including those written by academic staff members
- course teaching material produced by academic staff
- examples of optional course documentation
- assessment material: examples of oral and written examination documents, including multiple choice questions, short answer questions, essay topics, assessed coursework, clinical portfolios
- examples of student examination answers from a wide range of courses and assessments

Groups of teaching and administrative staff and students interviewed

- TEI Lamia site
  - academic staff (all available full time and part time staff)
  - administrative and support staff (office and library staff, technical staff in various laboratories)
  - students from various years of the programme and their representatives, including Erasmus exchange students, international students and students from other Faculties

- graduates of the Department undertaking postgraduate studies abroad (through a Skype link)
- MODIP committee
- IET
- Clinical Site
  - Head of the Hospital Department of Physiotherapy
  - Head of Education for staff continuing professional development and student education
  - members of clinical physiotherapy staff
  - part time lecturers at TEI Lamia supervising students on clinical placements
  - the majority of students on clinical placements at the hospital at the time

#### Facilities visited by the External Evaluation Committee

- teaching
  - relevant classrooms and lecture theatres
  - relevant practical laboratories
  - library
  - computer laboratory
  - staff offices
- clinical
  - patient treatment areas
  - therapy rooms and associated equipment (e.g. hydrotherapy, electrotherapy, movement therapy)
  - student seminar areas
  - gym with rehabilitation equipment
  - staff offices
  - restaurant and other facilities for staff and patients
- research
  - research laboratories
- other services
  - leisure facilities (e.g. gym, amphitheatre)
  - canteen
  - administrative offices (e.g. Erasmus)

## II. The Internal Evaluation Procedure

### Appropriateness of sources and documentation used

- The sources and documentation used in the internal evaluation process followed the guidelines of the HQAA, with some adjustments being made to reflect the Department of Physiotherapy and TEI Lamia: for example, changes in questionnaires (IER p5).
- The sources and documentation used in compiling the report were drawn from all relevant sectors of TEI Lamia: these are clearly expressed in the IER (pp5-6).

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

- The evidence collected and evaluated for compilation of the report was appropriate to the objectives set in the IER (p4).
- The IET ensured that data on all courses was collected from students by the teaching staff. In addition, all members of staff completed review forms (IER p5).
- The conclusions drawn from this evidence are therefore robust.
- Other documentation was obtained from other sectors of TEI Lamia.
- Overall, the quality and completeness of the documentation was good.

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

- The EEC considers that the objectives of the internal evaluation process have been fully met by the Department. The objectives set for the evaluation process are clearly outlined in the preface of the IER (p4) while the process followed by the Department is explained on pages 5-8. Objectives 1 and 2 are fully addressed in the conclusions (pp88-90) and objectives 3, 4 and 5 in the improvement plans (pp91-93).



## **A. Curriculum**

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

### **APPROACH**

What are the goals and objectives of the Curriculum?

- The goals and objectives of the Physiotherapy Department, as presented in the IER (pp11-13) and the Prospectus (p7), appear to be in agreement with Ministerial Decision 65145/E5 (Government Gazette/FEK 915/14.07.2006). These are also in accordance with recommendations of the European Parliament Council of 23 April 2008 on the establishment of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF) for lifelong learning (2008/C 111/01) for Level 6 (Bachelor) in the field of healthcare.

What is the plan for achieving them?

- The IET has proposed detailed short and medium term action plans (IER pp91-92) to ensure that these goals and objectives are achieved and updated to reflect changes in professional demands. For example, the curriculum has been reviewed, and staff are encouraged to present at conferences and submit papers for publication. However, some initiatives, such as the development of postgraduate programmes (p92), cannot be fulfilled under the existing remit of TEIs.

How were the objectives decided?

- The academic members of staff are all involved in formulating Departmental policy, and therefore the objectives – as presented in the IER (p14) and reinforced during meetings between academic staff and the EEC.

Which factors were taken into account?

- The IER (pp13-14) outlined and analysed the requirements for entry level into the profession as stipulated by:
  - the EQF ([http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc44\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/lifelong-learning-policy/doc44_en.htm))
  - the WCPT (<http://www.wcpt.org/policy/ps-descriptionPT>)
  - relevant national legislature

Were they set against appropriate standards?

- Yes, as stated above.

Did the unit consult other stakeholders?

- Yes, all academic staff in the Department and clinical teachers in the hospital were consulted, as well as other relevant service sectors (e.g. library) in TEI Lamia.

Is the curriculum consistent with its objectives and the requirements of society?

- Yes, as outlined in the educational goals of each course of the programme, e.g. 'Principles of Neurorehabilitation' (documentation relating to new curriculum received during visit).
- With respect to the societal requirements, the curriculum facilitates education of students to a professional level to provide physiotherapeutic care in hospitals and the community (IER p70). However, no direct reference to the involvement of societal stakeholders in curriculum planning was evident in the IER.

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

- All staff were involved in curriculum planning.
- The student body was consulted via a detailed questionnaire (IER p5).

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

- Yes, there is a clear, detailed and excellent academic development strategy (IER pp74-80). This was reflected in the new curriculum course material provided during the visit.

#### IMPLEMENTATION

How effectively are the Department's goals implemented by the curriculum?

- Very effectively; the curriculum corresponds to the Departmental goals as shown in the IER (p17).

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

- The curriculum is comparable to European, North American, African, Asian and Australasian programmes of study with which the EEC is familiar.

Is the structure of the curriculum rational and clearly articulated?

- Yes, the curriculum is rational as demonstrated in the 'Declaration Courses - Registration Renewal' document obtained during the visit. It is also seen in the relationships between the prerequisites and dependent courses (IER p23, Table 3-e; Prospectus p18, Paragraph 4.2.3).

Is the curriculum coherent and functional?

- On the basis of the observations above, the EEC considers the curriculum to be coherent and functional.

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

- On the basis of the information reviewed, the EEC considers the material for each course appropriate.
- However, the EEC regards the student workload for courses as excessive at more than 70hours/week (Prospectus p16). The ECTS guidelines (European Communities, 2009) recommend a workload of 1500-1800 hours/60 credits (effectively one year of full time study). The workload of students in the Department is considerably more than this.

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

- By international standards, the permanent academic staff are exceptionally well qualified.
- The part time staff are drawn from a pool of well qualified individuals.
- Current resources appear to be excellent.
- However, the EEC is concerned that the late decisions by the Ministry of Education regarding the annual budget (operational expenses, subsistence and part time staff) for TEI Lamia affects the efficiency of the Department's decision making, planning processes and ultimately curriculum delivery. This poses a threat to the success of the Department.

## RESULTS

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

- The EEC is satisfied that the programme is achieving its goals and objectives, as detailed in the IER (pp11-12).
- Graduates of the programme are qualified to work as professional practitioners in Greece and other countries such as the UK, because the programme is at EQF Level 6. In addition, they are empowered to undertake postgraduate studies (MSc, PhD) in cognate subjects in Greece, and in both cognate and physiotherapy subjects in universities internationally.
- The EEC was unable to determine progression and success rates of the students. However, during the visit and meetings held with students, it became clear that some students felt they were held back by having to repeat courses.

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

- Yes, through an analysis of the data collected and evaluated, the IET has identified both positive and negative aspects of the Department (IER pp88-90). In response to these, the IET has developed short and medium term action plans to eliminate the negative and reinforce the positive aspects identified (IER pp91-92). The IET has also put forward proposals for action by TEI Lamia (IER p92), as well as to the State (IER p93) to facilitate these action plans.

## IMPROVEMENT

Does the Department know how the Curriculum should be improved?

- Yes, see above.

Which improvements does the Department plan to introduce?

- These are explained clearly and in detail in the IER (pp91-92). The EEC agrees with and supports these proposals.

## **B. Teaching**

### APPROACH

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

- The policies and philosophy of learning and teaching approaches are not clearly articulated in the documentation. However, teaching methods are listed for each course: this was provided in the new curriculum documentation seen during the visit.

### Teaching methods used

- With respect to the new curriculum, there is a good variety of teaching methods appropriate to each course. However, the volume of material in some courses appears to be excessive (see CURRICULUM – RESULTS above). This could be overcome by introducing more guided self-directed learning by the students, involving current evidence-based practice, with fewer didactic lectures. The learning outcomes and competencies to be achieved should be aligned with both learning/teaching methods and assessments.

### Teaching staff:student ratio

- Staff:student ratio based on permanent staff (~1:70) compares unfavourably with similar programmes elsewhere.
- By including part time staff this ratio is reduced (~1:30). However, this varies annually depending on the number of part time staff employed. This is determined by the budget allocation from the Ministry of Education. Fluctuation in staff numbers is a serious threat to the successful implementation of the curriculum and the facilitation of best practice in learning and teaching.

### Teacher/student collaboration

- Collaboration and communication between teachers and students, especially in clinical practice, is well established.
- Every student is allocated a student advisor (IER p83). This was established by the Department.

### Adequacy of means and resources

- Students are taught by committed, well-qualified teachers throughout the programme.
- The facilities are excellent. The movement science laboratory is world class.
- The EEC has some concerns about the limited out-of-hours access to electronic and library resources.

### Use of information technologies

- The use of IT and online learning is excellent and comparable to other physiotherapy departments known to the EEC.

#### Examination system

- The examination practices are a concern to the EEC. Each course has at least two examinations. Thus students take at least 16 examinations per year. This is considerably more than comparable programmes elsewhere. In the later years several courses involve oral presentations and vivas, the organisation of which is time and staff intensive. Assessment should be driven by the learning outcomes.
- The number of examinations staff have to set and mark for the whole programme (40 courses) could be as high as 80 each academic year, which, given the staff complement, is an excessive burden. This may have a significant impact on student learning, as well as the ability of staff to conduct research that would further promote the link between research and teaching, i.e. evidence-based practice in physiotherapy.

#### IMPLEMENTATION

##### Quality of teaching procedures

- There are a large number of didactic lectures, which may not be conducive to developing lifelong self-directed learners. These qualities are essential for the promotion of evidence-based, efficient healthcare and physiotherapy practice in a modern, fast-changing world.

##### Quality and adequacy of teaching materials and resources

- These are excellent and comparable to other physiotherapy programmes with which the EEC is familiar.

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

- Yes, local and international material (books, journals), are annually updated and the titles are comparable to international physiotherapy programmes.

##### Linking of research with teaching

- Excellent: there is a wide range of pedagogic and basic science research by Departmental staff, which informs teaching (IER p114, Annex 12-24). Staff research, which is recognised internationally, takes place in the Departmental laboratories and is directly linked to teaching and student research.

##### Mobility of academic staff and students

- There are affiliations with local and regional hospitals and clinics where students undertake their clinical practice courses (IER p55).
- The six months internship in semester eight is undertaken at hospitals and institutions across Greece (IER p55).
- There are well established staff and student Erasmus mobility programmes between the Department and a number of physiotherapy departments in European universities (IER p56).

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

- Students were engaged in the evaluation of the programme and clinical placements (IER pp5-6); this has been continued into the new curriculum. The elected student representatives provide the link between the teachers and students with respect to material and resources.

## RESULTS

### Efficacy of teaching

- Because the annexes of the IER were not provided in English, the efficacy of teaching was difficult to determine. Nevertheless, the fact that graduates are fully prepared for physiotherapy practice in Greece and abroad attests to the efficacy of the programme.
- Graduates from this programme are also accepted on to university postgraduate programmes of study in Greece and abroad. This would not be possible if the programme was not operating at EQF Level 6.

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

- Data were not available for individual courses. However, Table 11-6.2 (IER p112) suggests that approximately 25% of each cohort do not graduate. This is a cause for concern as it places an additional demand on staff and facilities. However, we understand that under current legislation students remain registered and therefore can take/repeat courses beyond the minimum completion time. The State has now partially addressed this latter issue.

### Differences between students in the time to graduation.

- The data provided in IER Table 11-6.2 (p112) gives limited information with the only complete set available being for the 2000-01 intake.

### Does the Department understand the reasons for such positive or negative results?

- Yes: the Department is taking steps to address the situation by encouraging the students to complete their studies within the minimum completion time. However, as noted above, legislation still permits students to remain registered with the Department and TEI Lamia beyond the minimum completion time.

## IMPROVEMENT

### Does the Department propose methods for improvement?

- Yes: these are clearly articulated in the short and medium term action plans at Departmental, Institutional and State level (IER pp91-93).

## **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 has a formulated policy which is clearly stated in the IER (p59).
- The Department's stated objectives in research are
  - to involve the teaching staff and undergraduate students in research activity wherever possible
  - to run postgraduate programmes if and when sanctioned
  - to continue to improve laboratory facilities
  - to apply for funding
  - to seek collaborations with other institutions
  - to present their research findings nationally and internationally

Has the Department set internal standards for assessing research?

- The IER does not present evidence for this.

### **IMPLEMENTATION**

How does the Department promote and support research?

- Throughout the undergraduate programme, students are encouraged to follow evidence-based practice and to evaluate critically the cognate literature.
- All final year students are expected to undertake a research project, to complete a dissertation (IER p59) and to present their findings at conferences and in joint publications with staff (IER p69).
- The Department has been pro-active in seeking funding through grant applications.
- The Department has facilitated the formation of collaborations with other research-active institutions within Greece and abroad.
- Physiotherapy graduates of TEI Lamia are supported and encouraged to continue into postgraduate studies.

Quality and adequacy of research infrastructure and support

- The implementation of the research policy is largely driven by the enthusiasm and dedication of the academic members of staff.
- The EEC observed the excellent laboratory facilities available for carrying out research and was particularly impressed with the movement science laboratory.
- However, access to laboratories for research activities is hindered due to heavy demand from teaching.
- No specific funding is allocated by the State to the Department for carrying out research.

Scientific publications, research projects and research collaborations.

- The implementation of the research policy is clearly mapped in the IER (pp59-63).

## RESULTS

How successfully were the Department's research objectives implemented?

- They have been successfully implemented and are measurable in their entirety; the only exception is the lack of provision of postgraduate programmes, which is due to external constraints.
- Physiotherapy graduates of TEI Lamia are encouraged to pursue Masters and doctoral programmes in physiotherapy. Due to the current constraints on postgraduate physiotherapy programmes within TEIs, students are forced to study outside Greece.

Scientific publications

- Despite the constraints on research activities, the Department has produced an impressive list of publications in both national and peer-reviewed international scientific journals (IER Annex 12-24) for such a small number of academic staff.
- One of the academic members of staff has published a handbook of manual techniques for physiotherapy.

Research projects

- The high quality of the dissertations attests to the success of the undergraduate research projects being undertaken in the Department.

Research collaborations

- The Department has been successful in forging links with other departments within TEI Lamia, as well as with many other institutions both in Greece and abroad (IER pp65-67).

Is the Department's research acknowledged and visible outside the Department?

- Yes, at local, national and international level, as seen above.
- The Department has also used external websites to disseminate their research output (e.g. Archimedes II).
- Achievements of the Department are announced through local media and presented at national and international scientific conferences.

Rewards and awards

- Distinctions and prizes have been awarded to members of the Department's teaching staff as detailed in the IER (p68).



## IMPROVEMENT

### Improvements in research proposed by the Department

- The EEC supports the Department's statement (IER p59) that the recent enactment of laws (3653/2008: Institutional framework for research and technology and other provisions; 3685/2008: Institutional framework for postgraduate studies) by the State is a welcome development and will advance research activity within TEI Lamia.
- The EEC agrees that it is vital that the Department is permitted to establish Masters and doctoral programmes; failure to do so constitutes a potential threat to the retention of high calibre staff.
- More laboratory space dedicated to research would assist output.
- The Department should formulate clear internal standards in order to measure staff research output.

### Initiatives in this direction undertaken by the Department

- Despite limitations (often imposed from outside), the Department has been remarkably successful in their research activity.

## **D. All Other Services**

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

All other services were considered in the IER in terms of

1. Efficiency of Administrative and Technical Services
2. Student Welfare Services
3. Infrastructure of any kind used by the Department.

### **APPROACH**

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

- The Department's views of these services are detailed in the IER (pp81-87). The main concerns are:
  - The number of administrative staff is inadequate to support the students and academic staff (ratio ~1/300). The Department feels that this has an adverse effect on student support, as the opening hours are restricted to 11.00 to 13.00 (IER p81) each day, during which time students are in classes or clinical placements. In addition the Secretariat premises are considered to be inadequate (IER p85), resulting in inefficient working practices.
  - The library resources are considered to be adequate, with a good collection of sufficient multiple copies of recent relevant textbooks and access to electronic resources (IER p84).
  - However, the library opening hours are perceived to be inadequate to support the programme. The Department considers it necessary for the hours to be extended to 21.00 (IER p81). The EEC supports this view.
  - There is also concern regarding funding of the Operational Programme for Education and Initial Vocational Training (EPEAEK) in the future (IER p84).
  - The IT services are considered to be satisfactory (IER p82).
  - No comments were made in the IER regarding Student Welfare Services, the exception being the establishment of a student advisor programme by the Department.
  - During the site visit, reference was made to extra-curricular sporting activities organised by the student body and supported by staff.

Does the Department have a policy to simplify administrative procedures?

- Yes: as outlined in the IER (p91). This includes administrative restructuring (creation of sectors, reassignment of staff and reorganisation of Departmental committees) to facilitate the swift implementation of the Department's development plan and the new curriculum.
- In addition, the Department has outlined proposals for action by TEI Lamia, specifically with respect to improvements of the Academic Library, the Network Operations Centre, the International Relations and European Programmes Office and the Careers Office, as well as to student welfare (IER p92).

Are most procedures processed electronically?

- This is not clear from the documentation reviewed. During the visit it became apparent that some procedures were processed electronically, but there is still room for improvement e.g. an institutional database.

#### IMPLEMENTATION

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

- In the short term action plan (IER pp91), the Department specifically addresses administrative restructuring. This was reinforced during the site visit.

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

- The academic support services are good.
- The facilities for extracurricular activities are way below par.

#### RESULTS

Are administrative and other services adequate and functional?

- The EEC is sympathetic to the Department's concerns (IER pp81-87).
- Secretarial support for both staff and students is inadequate; further staff are required for such a large student population.
- Nevertheless, all the services function within the constraints outlined above.

#### IMPROVEMENTS

Has the Department identified methods to improve the services provided?

- Yes: detailed proposals have been put forward to address the issues identified (IER pp91-93). The EEC fully endorses these proposals.

Initiatives undertaken in this direction.

- The Department has already implemented some of the points in the short and medium term action plans (IER pp91-92). The EEC observed these initiatives during the site visit.

## Collaboration with social, cultural and production (SCP) organisations

Quality, originality and significance of the Department's initiatives.

### SCP Bodies

- A brief overview of the form and function of SCP organisation would have been helpful.

### Department affiliation with SCP bodies

The Department's affiliations with SCP bodies have been, and continue to be, extensive.

- Four have been completed in the last five years (2004-09). These include clinical, community and professional bodies (IER p70). The successful completion of these affiliations shows their strength and viability (IER p70, p73). All members of Department's academic staff and students have participated.
- The Department has had positive acknowledgement of the quality of their scientific collaboration from significant individuals and bodies, such as the Municipality of Keratsini Centre for the Elderly for their contribution to the Archimedes II programme, as well as the Hellenic Scientific Physiotherapy Society (IER p70).
- There is genuine interest from SCP bodies, who have approached the Department's academic staff for scientific support through the establishment of further affiliations.
- SCP interest is sustained in many ways: through Departmental website announcements, press releases, exhibitions and conferences. In addition, an update meeting focusing on professional rights and Presidential Decree 208/2008 was held to brief SCP bodies (IER p72).
- The fact that members of SCP are invited to contribute to teaching in the Department emphasises the importance of these interactions to the students (IER p72).
- The clinical practice and internship activities are highly effective in establishing and enhancing affiliations. However, the absence of certified laboratories, prohibited under the TEI legislative framework, limits the Department's ability to provide healthcare services (IER p71).
- The Department's participation in policy-related affiliation agreements is limited to clinical internships only. Members of the Department are prevented from active participation in local/regional development projects by current legislation.
- The EEC was impressed by the extent and breadth of these affiliations. The Department is commended on this aspect of its activities.

### ***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.*

Potential inhibiting factors to the Department at State, Institutional and Departmental level, and proposals on ways to overcome them.

- State
  - The physiotherapy qualification awarded by the Department should continue to be recognised at degree (Bachelor of Science) level (EQF Level 6), as is the practice in other European countries.
  - The physiotherapy programme at TEI Lamia should be given university status in order to permit them to develop Masters and doctoral programmes of study. This would not only bring in additional funding to support the Departmental budget, but would also encourage graduates to remain in Greece for postgraduate study; furthermore, this would facilitate the generation of evidence-based practice.
  - The ability of students studying beyond the minimum four year time span and repeatedly failing courses inhibits the efficient running of the curriculum. The EEC was pleased to see the introduction of a maximum number (six) of years of study for physiotherapy and would support a maximum programme limit of five years with the possibility of repeating any assessment only once (as is normal elsewhere).
  - Some control over staffing levels and student admission numbers should be devolved to the institution.
- Institution
  - TEI Lamia appeared to be very supportive of the activities of the Department.
- Departmental
  - Both the teaching and assessment methods could be more efficient without compromising current excellent standards.
  - As student learning is not facilitated solely by lectures (partly dictated by the State), more student-centred learning could be introduced.
  - Clearer guidelines are required to ensure consistency of assessment between and within courses, as well as across the programme.

#### Short, medium and long term goals

- Short term
  - All the short term action plans listed in the IER (p91) have been, or are in the process of being, achieved.
- Medium and long term
  - The State is severely restricting the ability of the Department to apply for research funding and to produce research output by prohibiting postgraduate degree programmes to be undertaken at TEI Lamia.
  - Within these constraints, the Department is concentrating its activities in the achievement of the goals and objectives as stated in the IER (p92).
  - A key feature of professional development and lifelong learning is the support of professional physiotherapists by higher education institutions; the EEC supports the Department's wish to contribute to this development e.g. post-registration courses, SCP affiliations.

#### Plan and actions for improvement by the Department/Academic Unit

- With reference to the IER (p92), the EEC supports the Department's desire to reduce State bureaucracy, review and update their Internal and Study Regulations and improve support services such as the library and student welfare.

## ***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**

#### **Positive aspects**

1. The Department is staffed by committed and enthusiastic individuals who enjoy working at TEI Lamia. They are passionate about their professional roles and feel they have ownership of the processes and procedures involved in curriculum design and development. They also feel included in the decision making within the Department. The academic staff are extremely well qualified, with the majority either holding or working towards a doctoral degree.
2. The facilities are excellent. The teaching rooms and lecture theatres are sufficient in number; the teaching laboratories and equipment are eminently suitable for physiotherapy education. The research laboratory for biomechanical and cardiovascular/respiratory assessments is outstanding and would be the envy of many UK university physiotherapy programmes. The facilities provided for clinical education are of a good standard and comparable to those with which the EEC is familiar.
3. Clinical education was of a high standard, with placements being well organised despite the constraints on staff time due to the large number of students. There was good communication and liaison between the hospital physiotherapy staff and the Department of Physiotherapy at TEI Lamia.
4. The students appeared to enjoy their learning experience and felt well supported by the staff, both in TEI Lamia and during their clinical placements. The majority of the approximately 100 students the EEC met were enthusiastic, well motivated and articulate. The EEC was impressed by the way in which the clinical students showed initiative by instigating their own peer learning groups. Overall, the students were supportive of TEI Lamia and valued their educational experience.
5. The Department makes an excellent effort to create and maintain involvement in European initiatives (such Erasmus and Leonardo programmes) and to forge strong links with Higher Education Institutions in other countries.

#### **Areas for improvement and development**

1. The staff:student ratio compares unfavourably with other programmes of physiotherapy in other countries. However, this is under the control of the Ministry of Education.
2. Access to library resources is restricted to normal working hours. We recommend that library staff put a more flexible arrangement in place.
3. Learning and teaching methods and assessments should be aligned with learning outcomes and competencies. The Department should consider changing some of their assessment procedures to make them more efficient.
4. Staff should also review programme regulations in order to introduce consistency into assessments both within and between courses, as well as consider reducing the overall number of assessments.
6. TEI Lamia should introduce and develop robust quality assurance procedures. The physiotherapy Department is in the process of establishing such procedures.

**Conclusion**

**The EEC is completely satisfied that the standard of education provided by the Department of Physiotherapy at TEI Lamia is equivalent to Level 6 within the European Quality Framework.**



The Members of the Committee

Name and Surname

Signature

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