



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ  
**Α.ΔΙ.Π.**  
 ΑΡΧΗ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ & ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ  
 ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΣΤΗΝ ΑΝΩΤΑΤΗ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗ

HELLENIC REPUBLIC  
**H.Q.A.**  
 HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE  
 AND ACCREDITATION AGENCY

## EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

DEPARTMENT OF PRE-SCHOOL EDUCATION AND EDUCATIONAL DESIGN

UNIVERSITY OF THE AEGEAN

November 2013



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## **External Evaluation Committee**

The Committee responsible for the External Evaluation of the Department of Pre-School Education & Educational Design of the University of the Aegean consisted of the following three (3) expert evaluators drawn from the Registry constituted by the HQA in accordance with Law 3374/2005:

1. Dr George Philippou (Coordinator)

Professor retired, University of Cyprus

2. Dr Michalinos Zembylas

Associate Professor, Open University, Nicosia, Cyprus

3. Dr. Paul Zachos,

Director Association for the Cooperative Advancement of Science and Education

**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**

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) welcomed the opportunity to participate in this important evaluation instigated by the Ministry of Education of the Government of Greece. The EEC was warmly received by the Vice-rectors of the University of the Aegean (UoA), faculty, and staff of the the Department of Pre-School Education & Educational Design (DE.PS.E.E.D) of the UoA who went out of their way to facilitate the efficient functioning of the EEC. The staff of the DE.PS.E.E.D contributed whole-heartedly to the evaluation process with professionalism, honesty and enthusiasm. The conclusions described below were reached **unanimously**.

### **Description of the DE.PS.E.E.D**

The academic personnel of the DE.PS.E.E.D is comprised of 9 Professors, 3 Associate Professors, 7 Assistant Professors, 2 lecturers and 8 contracted faculty members (note: the previous academic year was the last in which there were contracted faculty members). The Bachelor’s program at DE.PS.E.E.D of the UoA is comprised of 8 semesters of theoretical and practical study. The Department accepts approximately 240 students into its undergraduate program each year and has approximately 850 undergraduate students currently enrolled across the 8 semesters of the program.

Graduate Programs: Since academic year 2004-2005, the DE.PS.E.E.D also offers also graduate programs; it now offers four graduate programs and a fifth in cooperation with two Departments of the Aristotelian University of Thessalonica. The main goal of these programs is to provide the educational system with high calibre graduates who have deep understanding and practical experience in educational design and interdisciplinary studies. The DE.PS.E.E.D also provides for Ph.D. studies. Currently, the total number of graduate students is about 360 and the number of PhD candidates is approximately 50.

Throughout this report we discuss the bachelor, graduate level and PhD programs separately, as we consider the Department’s effort in each of these levels as being of distinct importance.

### **I. The External Evaluation Procedure**

- Dates and brief account of the site visit.
- Whom did the Committee meet?
- List of Reports, documents, other data examined by the Committee.
- Groups of teaching and administrative staff and students interviewed
- Facilities visited by the External Evaluation Committee.

#### **The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) has visited:**

1. The Hellenic Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education (HQA) (4/11/2013),
2. The main campus of the School of Humanities of the UoA (5/11/2013),
3. The Kameiros building, where most meetings with faculty, administration and students were held (5-6/11/2013),
4. The cafeteria of the School of Humanities (5/11/2013),
5. The restaurant of the School of Humanities (5/11/2013),
6. The Demetra building, home of graduate programs and e-learning facilities (6/11/2013),
7. The gym and theatre room of the DE.PS.E.E.D (5/11/2013)
8. The new building of the DE.PS.E.E.D (Kleovoulos Building) (5/11/2013), and
9. The Town Hall (having a meeting with two former mayors and representatives of social, cultural and production organizations) (6/11/2013).

#### **The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) has met:**

1. Representatives of the Hellenic Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education
2. The Vice Rector of academic affairs of the UoA
3. The Vice Rector of research and strategic planning of the UoA
4. The Chair of the DE.PS.E.E.D
5. The Internal Evaluation Group and the academic and scientific staff of the DE.PS.E.E.D
6. A group of undergraduate students of the DE.PS.E.E.D
7. A group of postgraduate and PhD students of the DE.PS.E.E.D
8. The administrative and secretariat staff of the DE.PS.E.E.D
9. The directors of the 4 graduate programs of the DE.PS.E.E.D

10. The director of the “Didaskalion”
11. The director of the Practicum
12. A group of graduates of the Bachelor and the graduate and PhD programs of the DE.PS.E.E.D.
13. Representatives of social, cultural and productive organizations of Rhodes that cooperate with the DE.PS.E.E.D.

**The reports and the documents provided by the (HQA) and the DE.PS.E.E.D that have been reviewed by the EEC comprise the following:**

1. The External Evaluation of Higher Education Academic Units Guidelines for Members of External Evaluation Committees (March 2012)
2. The Internal Evaluation Reports (IER) of the DE.PS.E.E.D for the academic years 2009-2010, 2010-2011 and 2011-2012
3. The programs of undergraduate studies for the last five academic years
4. The programs of graduate studies
5. The Guidelines for the graduate (Master) Dissertation
6. The Curriculum Vitae of the Faculty members of the DE.PS.E.E.D
7. A list of recent publications by the Faculty members of the DE.PS.E.E.D and sample publications
8. Course evaluation student-questionnaire
9. Samples of exams
10. Samples of undergraduate and graduate theses
11. Protocols for the practicum
12. Protocols for the collaboration of the DE.PS.E.E.D with various social organizations

**The groups of teaching and administrative staff and students of the DE.PS.E.E.D interviewed by the EEC comprised the following:**

1. The Academic staff (the Internal Evaluation Group, the elected academic staff and scientific staff)
2. Laboratory associates from the Department
3. Special technical staff members
4. Undergraduate Students
6. Graduate students

7. PhD candidates

8. Administrative / secretarial staff

9. Graduates of the undergraduate, graduate and PhD degree programs.

The atmosphere during the site visits and meetings was collegial and receptive, while remaining on a professional level. Faculty members were very friendly and they facilitated the EEC's work by establishing a constructive dialogue and providing information and data, wherever possible. The EEC particularly enjoyed the constructive meeting with students and graduates of the DE.PS.E.E.D.

## **II. The Internal Evaluation Procedure**

Please comment on:

- Appropriateness of sources and documentation used
- Quality and completeness of evidence reviewed and provided
- To what extent have the objectives of the internal evaluation process been met by the Department?

The DE.PS.E.E.D provided the EEC with documentation that was adequate, of high quality, and fully informative. The objectives of the H.Q.A.A. internal evaluation were met by the DE.PS.E.E.D and the EEC recognizes that enthusiastic effort was put into the process. In particular, the EEC would like to acknowledge the fine work in meeting the challenges involved in preparing supporting materials including a CD rom which containing all the presentations made by representatives of the DE.PS.E.E.D.

## ***A. Curriculum***

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

### **APPROACH**

- What are the goals and objectives of the Curriculum? What is the plan for achieving them?
- How were the objectives decided? Which factors were taken into account? Were they set against appropriate standards? Did the unit consult other stakeholders?
- Is the curriculum consistent with the objectives of the Curriculum and the requirements of the society?



- How was the curriculum decided? Were all constituents of the Department, including students and other stakeholders, consulted?
- Has the unit set a procedure for the revision of the curriculum?

#### Undergraduate curriculum

The goals and the objectives of the current undergraduate Curriculum are stated in the IER of the DE.PS.E.E.D. They are:

1. To prepare students to become pre-primary teachers in contemporary multi-cultural, technological society, with an emphasis on designing, implementing and evaluating educational programs, activities and resources for pre-school and other educational settings.
2. To prepare graduates with the academic background necessary for graduate studies.

The plan for realizing the objectives can be seen in the *Undergraduate Study Guide* which presents, learning objectives, instructional methods and plans for assessment for each course offered by the department.

The members of the department have worked over many years to identify the critical factors of contemporary life that competent professional educators must be able to confront including technological progress, multi-cultural issues, environmental sustainability and issues of gender. The three factors of ICT, environment, and gender permeate all the courses as does intentionality concerning principles of educational design.

The DE.PS.E.E.D has adopted the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). The EEC observed, however, that the program of study is overloaded with courses resulting in allocation of a relatively small number of ECTS per course (particularly to elective courses).

Every indication is that the Department is in ongoing communication with the local community, with the educational and research communities as well as with the needs of their students.

On these bases the EEC concludes that the Curriculum is consistent with the goals and objectives of the set by the DE.PS.E.E.D and the requirements of the society.

The curriculum has been structured to respond to the DE.PS.E.E.D goals and objectives, and is organized around five “informal” academic areas or divisions:

1. Pedagogical studies and teaching (courses corresponding to 34 ECTS)
2. Psychology and special education (courses corresponding to 26 ECTS)
3. Sociology, economy, educational policy and gender studies (courses corresponding to 26 ECTS)
4. Literature, language and culture (courses corresponding to 26 ECTS)

#### 5. Science and ICT in teaching and learning (courses corresponding to 26 ECTS)

These areas of the curriculum are effectively linked with the job market through well-organized work study and practicum experiences for students.

For graduation, the student has to complete 55 courses comprising 162 teaching hours or 240 ECTS units. Of the courses 27 are compulsory; 10 are compulsory elective; 4 are research courses, 3 are specialized subjects (e.g. creative music pedagogy); 9 are practicum courses. There is an elective thesis comprised of 6 teaching hours or 6 ECTS. In addition, students are required to establish competence in a foreign language without credit.

The EEC has also observed that multiple and transparent methods of evaluating students are used. It is also pointed out that there is a satisfactory structure and organization of teaching and learning material in the DE.PS.E.E.D.

The EEC is concerned about the overwhelming number of courses required for graduation (n=55) and that existing courses have been aligned with ECTS in a way that has undervalued the workload associated with the courses.

Both internal and external factors have influenced the development of the objectives and the curriculum development by the DE.PS.E.E.D. However, financial restrictions and regulations imposed by the Ministry of Education impede the ability of the DE.PS.E.E.D to design and implement a more balanced curriculum. Updating of the objectives and suggestions for improvement of the program of study are acknowledged as included in the IER of the DE.PS.E.E.D.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION**

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

The DE.PS.E.E.D's goals are implemented effectively by the curriculum. The curriculum is rational, clearly articulated and its structure is functional. It combines theory and practice well.

Human, material and space resources are not always adequate. The EEC observed that the members of the academic and scientific personnel are adequately qualified, but the number of courses and the student-teacher ratio requires additional staff. The computer labs are very small

and it is, therefore, not always possible to serve the needs of students. However, the faculty and secretarial and technical staff try very hard to respond to these needs by working extra hours to support large numbers of students. The internet connection is of high quality but there is a noticeable lack of up-to-date equipment for the computer labs. Although students are encouraged to use electronic facilities (e.g. print their own grade report) many depend on the secretarial staff to do this for them. Complaints were raised by faculty, students and technical staff concerning the reduction of access to critical electronic databases. The EEC is concerned that there is only one equipment repair person available to serve the entire School.

## **RESULTS**

- How well is the implementation achieving the Department's predefined goals and objectives?
- If not, why is it so? How is this problem dealt with?
- Does the Department understand why and how it achieved or failed to achieve these results?

There is a good alignment between the predefined goals and objectives of the curriculum and its subsequent implementation. The hard work and enthusiasm of the faculty members, technical and secretarial staff of the DE.PS.E.E.D to achieve the aims and objectives of the curriculum under extremely difficult circumstances is evident.

## **IMPROVEMENT**

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

Several areas of the curriculum that need to be improved have been both stated in the IER and identified during the meetings with the faculty members of the DE.PS.E.E.D. The EEC observed that most courses are seen as equivalent to no more than 4 ECTS units while in most universities undergraduate courses offered three-hours weekly are equivalent to at least 5 ECTS. As a consequence, students are required to attend a large number of courses and the faculty to offer more courses than should actually be required. It is, therefore, recommended that the DE.PS.E.E.D reconsider the workload of each course and align it with the allocation of ECTS per course.

In addition, the EEC recommends that the DE.PS.E.E.D should structure the program of study by semester in such a way that it becomes evident which courses are prerequisites of others. In this direction, the effective functioning of the academic advisor practice will help students in selecting their courses and dealing more effectively with the demands of each course.

The Department envisions activities of improvement which include the following:

- To establish the generic professional qualifications that are needed to design, implement and evaluate educational programs and to become a center for developing such educational professionals.
- Course offerings need to be evaluated in an ongoing fashion so that they most efficiently lead to the realization of the department's broad objectives
- The development of exemplary educational materials for pre-school education with an emphasis on educational design aspects

The EEC fully subscribes to this plan for program improvement.

## ***B. Teaching***

### **APPROACH:**

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

The DE.PS.E.E.D has done a lot of work to create and advance a strong set of academic teaching policies and methodologies. This is evident from the IER, its formal and informal curricula and the discussions the EEC had with faculty members and undergraduate and graduate students. The results of these policies culminate in the production of graduates with a high level of theoretical and practical abilities who are adequately prepared for ongoing graduate studies and who are well-equipped to become pre-primary teachers. This is supported by the successful participation of graduate students in the master's and PhD program of the DE.PS.E.E.D as well as in other universities in Greece and abroad.

- Teaching methods used

The IER indicates a comprehensive awareness of teaching methods and that a variety of methods of teaching are used in theoretical and practical courses of the DE.PS.E.E.D including lectures, discussions, interactive workshops and skills acquisition. This variety of methodologies appears to cover learning objectives in all domains (cognitive, psychomotor, and affective) and to respond to different learning styles of students.

- Teaching staff/student ratio

The IER identified an academic staff/student ratio of about 1:34.4. This ratio included 22 faculty members and 8 contracted faculty. Since there will be no contracted academic staff from the current academic year, this ratio will get considerably worse. In the theoretical modules there are audiences of 150 or more students. This is mainly due to the fact that there is no systematic control of student registration in the courses offered by the DE.PS.E.E.D each semester and number of courses required for graduation. The EEC recommends that a maximum number of students per-

course be established (academic advisors can contribute to such a solution), that the academic staff should be increased and the number of required for graduation courses be decreased.

- Teacher/student collaboration

The academic staff of the DE.PS.E.E.D is available to students before, during, and after each semester. Students and graduates of the DE.PS.E.E.D affirmed the enthusiastic efforts of the faculty and technical and secretarial staff to support them in their learning and to encourage them to undertake further studies at graduate level. It was evident in meetings with students and graduates of all levels that there is an excellent and respectful relationship between students and the faculty members, creating an effective learning environment in the DE.PS.E.E.D.

- Adequacy of means and resources

The DE.PS.E.E.D functions very well under very difficult circumstances. The teaching rooms are not all digitally equipped and are characterized by inflexible seating arrangements which do not enable effective group work. There is no easy access for disabled individuals. Office accommodation at present is inadequate and the staff and students deserve much better. The EEC had the chance to visit the renovated building of the School of Humanities which will be ready for use in the next couple of months. This will significantly contribute to the improvement of the working conditions of the DE.PS.E.E.D.

- Use of information technologies

Students have access to the internet throughout the campus. They also have access to papers in international journals through the Hellas-Link database. Most recently however students and faculty have reported that this critical access to information is not presently available.

The DE.PS.E.E.D Web site contains faculty CVs, research interests and course descriptions in Greek and English.

- System of written exams

Students are assessed through written exam at the end of each course at the end of the semester, as required by Greek legislation. This appears to be managed equitably and effectively. Some courses are assessed through various techniques including writing essays and reflective diaries.

## **IMPLEMENTATION**

- Quality of teaching procedures

As previously mentioned, the DE.PS.E.E.D students have reported great satisfaction with the teaching procedures to which they have been exposed.

- Quality and adequacy of teaching materials and resources.

The EEC reviewed textbooks and teaching materials used in courses and found them to be relevant and appropriate. Enriching the library with more up to date books and journals and developing on line facilities for the faculty staff and students is highly recommended as students reported inadequacy in this respect.

- Linking of research with teaching

The EEC observed that the faculty staff of DE.PS.E.E.D applies research findings in teaching and learning and affirms the importance of linking research and practice for improving the quality of education.

- Mobility of academic staff and students

The DE.PS.E.E.D interfaces with European exchange programmes such as ERASMUS which provide important opportunities for both staff and student exchanges. However, the student participation in such programs is very poor. It is also noted that participation in international and national conferences is not financially supported. However, quite a few faculty members attend such conferences on their own expenses. The EEC strongly believes that students should be encouraged to participate in the ERASMUS program as this will enrich their experiences and help them further develop their professional competencies. Moreover, the faculty as well as PhD students should be financially supported to present their research findings in international conferences, something that will give them the opportunity to receive feedback and improve the quality of their work. In this way, research collaboration with other universities and colleagues can also be developed.

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

A common student questionnaire is used to evaluate the quality of each course and the teaching and academic staff. Response rates are rather limited and vary in different courses. Feedback from results emerging from a statistical analysis of this survey is provided to the faculty members. The EEC strongly believes that staff evaluation is of great importance and the DE.PS.E.E.D should encourage more students to participate in this process.

## **RESULTS**

Efficacy of teaching

The EEC believes that the teaching staff of the DE.PS.E.E.D is effective. This was documented statistically in the IER-based evaluative surveys of courses and staff, and was confirmed by the DE.PS.E.E.D students during the interviews. The goals and objectives of the curriculum are met both through carefully constructed formal and informal curricula. The formal curriculum is described in the IER. Furthermore, extra-curricular activities are offered to students. For example, students are encouraged to do volunteer work in the community as mentioned during the interviews with the social, cultural and productive representatives, the students of DE.PS.E.E.D and the faculty members. Thus, the informal curriculum includes the invaluable ongoing voluntary contribution of students to the community which creates a strong relationship between the DE.PS.E.E.D and the community. It is also expected that graduates of DE.PS.E.E.D will be able to promote this attitude to their pupils in pre-primary schools.

In regard to the student learning outcomes, for the last three years the mean value of students' grades was generally high. The EEC does not know the basis on which grades are assigned and so is unable to interpret this value. It is recommended that faculty members monitor the attainment of the most important course and program learning objectives on a formative basis and use the results to inform students of their progress and improve instruction.

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

The EEC has not noticed any such discrepancies.

Differences between students in time to graduation and final degree grades

The number of students completing the program within the expected time period has varied over the years. In general, the proportion of students graduating on time has increased since academic year 2005-2006.

The EEC was only able to observe final grades for the academic year 2012-2013. During this time the average grade on graduation was 8.19. Less than 1 % scored below 7.0 and roughly 75% scored between 7.0 and 8.4.

- Whether the DE.PS.E.E.D understands the reasons of such positive and negative results

The faculty of the DE.PS.E.E.D believes that students strive to graduate on time due to the fact that studying in Rhodes is quite expensive and their financial situation does not allow them to stay longer at the DE.PS.E.E.D. The DE.PS.E.E.D has also worked hard to improve student success and effective completion.

## **IMPROVEMENT**

- Does the Department propose methods and ways for improvement?

The IER indicates that teaching at the DE.PS.E.E.D can be improved through taking actions to

improve the facilities and resources of the DE.PS.E.E.D. Specifically, enrichment of the library will contribute to the improvement of teaching resources and aids available to students. Moreover, in the IER it is noted that improvement of computer labs and technical-electronic facilities is necessary for quality teaching. This will provide students with greater flexibility in their learning and could improve student participation in theory learning.

- What initiatives does it take in this direction?

The DE.PS.E.E.D is continuously demanding the upgrade of teaching facilities and resources mentioned above. However, financial constraints imposed by the Ministry and understaffing do not always allow the UoA to provide these facilities to the DE.PS.E.E.D.

### **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 for research reveals three main ways of supporting faculty members to undertake research projects. First, faculty members are supported to establish research labs and work in groups to develop research proposals in their areas of interest. At the moment, the DE.PS.E.E.D has 6 research labs (2 of which are informal, i.e. not officially established). Second, the DE.PS.E.E.D encourages faculty members to participate in research projects and provides support to academic members to develop their research proposals (e.g. budget development of the proposal). Third, the DE.PS.E.E.D supports the organisation of international and national conferences in Rhodes. Although the EEC observed that the faculty members work closely together in research projects, the main objectives for research seem to be individualized especially since the policy of DE.PS.E.E.D does not specify the objectives of research and the areas that need to be covered.

- Has the Department set internal standards for assessing research?

The DE.PS.E.E.D does not employ internal standards for assessing research.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION**

- How does the Department promote and support research?
- Quality and adequacy of research infrastructure and support.



- Scientific publications.
- Research projects.
- Research collaborations.

The DE.PS.E.E.D encourages faculty to conduct research, to collaborate with other researcher in Greece and abroad and to include graduate students in the collaborations.

As already mentioned, the DE.PS.E.E.D faculty does not receive any financial support to participate in national and international conferences. However, the great majority of the faculty participate in conferences at their own expense.

It is important to note that there are currently more than 50 PhD candidates in the DE.PS.E.E.D. The EEC believes that PhD students should receive financial support to present their papers in international conferences and receive feedback in order to improve the quality of their studies. The EEC believes that the department does not have the human resources in the faculty to undertake teaching so many students, do research, and at the same time to advise such a large number of graduate students and PhD candidates.

## RESULTS

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

The IER provides a list of research projects and publications of the faculty members of the DE.PS.E.E.D. During the last 2 academic years, the faculty members of DE.PS.E.E.D published, on the average, a significant number of books/monographs (more than 5 per year), papers in journals with a referee system (more than 20 per year), and papers in conference-proceedings with a referee system (more than 60 per year), chapters in books (more than 12 per year), and also to non-refereed conferences (a considerable number). This provides an indication that the DE.PS.E.E.D encourages research and supports its faculty members to publish their work. Most of the publications involve collaboration among faculty members and in some cases with individuals outside of the department. However, most of the publications are in Greek. The EEC recommends

that publications in international journals with peer review system should be given higher priority as this will contribute to the establishment of international collaborations and enhance the standing and reputation of the department.

Some information about citations of the faculty publications is also provided. For example, it is mentioned that faculty publications were cited approximately 257 times during the academic year 2011-2012 in *Google Scholar*. We recommend that the department also identify citations in other reputable databanks such *Web of Science*, *Scopus* and *Publish or Perish*. In the IER, it is acknowledged that the DE.PS.E.E.D does not collect information on the citation records of each faculty member, something that the EEC considers as essential.

From the list of research projects provided in the IER it is noted that the faculty members participate in a large number of projects. However, in the last two years, the total budget of these projects is relatively small. This could be attributed to the fact that most projects are concerned with the provision of in-service training and in developing educational material. These projects also attempt to make use of information technology for training reasons. The EEC recommends that greater emphasis be given to basic research that can have a significant contribution to the theory development and testing and to the upgrading of the research status of the DE.PS.E.E.D.

The EEC observed that the Department's research objectives are achieved to a great extent. The research of the DE.PS.E.E.D is both acknowledged and made visible outside the DE.PS.E.E.D through scientific publications, conference presentations, and professional meetings and through the departmental website. As has been noted above, however, additional international collaboration and dissemination of research findings should be encouraged.

## **IMPROVEMENT**

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

The design, implementation and evaluation themes that characterizes DE.PS.E.E.D programs presents an opportunity to initiate a program of empirical research that is much needed in the education community, that could put the Department in a position of leadership in the field. Starting with its own programs and courses the Department could pioneer research that empirically identifies significant learning goals and studies the factors that contribute to the attainment of learning outcomes associated with those goals for various types of students over time.

The ability of the Department to generate publications has been well established. The EEC recommends that faculty members now emphasize quality over quantity in their research efforts turning attention to specific targets such as publication in high impact international peer reviewed journals, gathering empirical substantiation for the Department's design model and applying for

research grants so they are not limited to the resources provided by the State.

We do recognize however that the appropriate support by the research office of the UoA should be provided to the faculty. We believe that the great energy, enthusiasm and ongoing innovation that characterize this department present a good investment opportunity worth of support by the research office of the UoA.

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

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

#### **APPROACH**

- How does the Department view the various services provided to the members of the academic community (teaching staff, students).
- Does the Department have a policy to simplify administrative procedures? Are most procedures processed electronically?
- Does the Department have a policy to increase student presence on Campus?

The DE.PS.E.E.D uses the available institutional resources in an effective way. According to the IER, the EEC's observations and the comments of the students and the academic staff **not** all the facilities of DE.PS.E.E.D (e.g. offices, classrooms, laboratories, meeting rooms, and library) are adequate. The DE.PS.E.E.D is very concerned about the lack of space for students, staff and infrastructure, and the EEC shares this concern. The permanent faculty as well as the contracted instructors lack private office space and share the same space with other persons. Furthermore, the DE.PS.E.E.D does not have a reading/quiet study room. The EEC acknowledges the urgent need for office space for academic and administrative staff.

Administrative procedures have been simplified recently but more actions should be taken in order to encourage academic and administrative staff to simplify procedures that would facilitate greater and more systematic use of information technology.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION**

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

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

The Secretariat of the DE.PS.E.E.D is staffed by 3 persons, who provide administrative services to 21 academic staff for more than 800 undergraduate students. The EEC believes that the infrastructure and the personnel needed to support this are insufficient. Moreover, the EEC considers that the library facilities are adequately established, that there is a need to enrich the catalogue with more recent books, international journals and other educational electronic material. Student access to the library, PCs and free internet access is considered to be satisfactory with improvements necessary.

The EEC visited a multipurpose room for theatre education and movement but did not visit any athletic facilities of the UoA. The EEC also found the restaurant and the cafeteria to be adequate.

#### IMPROVEMENTS

- Has the Department identified ways and methods to improve the services provided?
- Initiatives undertaken in this direction.

The work of the administrative staff is vital for the effective functioning of the DE.PS.E.E.D. Despite the efforts of the academic staff and support from the existing administrative staff, there is an urgent need for increasing the number of administrative staff.

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

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

Overall the EEC is impressed with the quality, originality and significance of the Department's initiatives in this field. The passion, courage, intelligence and commitment of the faculty members are inspiring. Some examples of the social contribution of the DE.PS.E.E.D are listed on page 149 of the IER and the EEC is deeply impressed by the significance of such contributions.

The IER indicates that the DE.PS.E.E.D has effectively built close collaboration with various social, cultural and productive organisations. This was evident during the interviews with students and graduates of DE.PS.E.E.D as well as during the meetings with representatives of various organisations at the Mayor's Hall. This is to be considered one of the great strengths and an exemplary feature of the Department's operations.

Interviews with various groups of current and former students indicated that the DE.PS.E.E.D has excellent relationships with schools in the local area. The DE.PS.E.E.D students are encouraged to participate in the activities of these schools and conduct studies that contribute to their professional

development.

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

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

- Please, comment on the Department's Potential inhibiting factors at State, Institutional and Departmental level and Proposals on ways to overcome the above inhibiting factors.
- Short-, medium- and long-term goals.
- Plan and actions for improvement by the Department/Academic Unit
- Long-term actions proposed by the Department.

The Strategic plan of the DE.PS.E.E.D focuses on the objectives of each of its five academic divisions and explains what each of these divisions contributes to the achievement of the wider aims of the department. It includes an account of inhibiting and potentially inhibiting factors at all levels (State, Institutional and Departmental) and ways of dealing with them. Perspectives for improvement are also mentioned.

The EEC considers the potential inhibiting factors to include the following:

#### *At State level*

1. Lack of funding
2. Insufficient infrastructure
3. The impact of confounding legislature on standards of education (for example, no realistic time limit for the completion of a degree, no limit on the number of times a student can repeat a course).
4. Lack of adequate research funding within the DE.PS.E.E.D
5. Delays in the appointments of academic and administrative staff.

#### *At Institutional level*

1. Lack of academic staff in several domains (e.g. music pedagogy)
2. Lack of research infrastructure, support and funding.
3. Limited international educational exchange opportunities for both faculty and students.

#### *Departmental level:*

1. There is a need to improve the administrative structures and procedures of the department to

achieve greater efficiency in achieving curricular and research objectives

2. There is a need for a focused research plan to strategically develop the field of educational design so that DE.PS.E.E.D's contribution can be recognized internationally.
3. Insufficient structure to support a program of PhD studies

The IER report (pp. 159-169) contains suggestions and strategic plans for improvement in all the areas mentioned above in the report.

The EEC's proposals on ways to overcome the above inhibiting factors are outlined in the final chapter of this report that contains concluding recommendations.

### **Postgraduate studies**

The DE.PS.E.E.D offers 4 graduate programs of its own and a fifth in collaboration with the University of Thessaloniki. The programs offered by the Department are Children's Literature and Pedagogic Material (49 students), Environmental Education (75 students), Gender and New Educational and Labour Environments in Information Society (70 students), Models of Design and Development of Educational Units (72 students). A PhD program in Education is also offered by the DE.PS.E.E.D (over 50 students). The research policies and objectives of the Master and the PhD programs are in line to those of the DE.PS.E.E.D. The Master programs are designed to provide a rigorous research degree in education. It is interdisciplinary, as noted above, and students are not only drawn from education but also from other disciplines. The goals of these programs are found in the respective sections of the IER. The programs differ in number of component courses and requirements for participation (e.g. face to face vs. blended learning).

The EEC's discussions with the postgraduate students and results of student surveys presented by program directors clearly showed that students are, for the most part, very satisfied with the Department's conduct of the graduate and the PhD program. Students reported a desire for increased opportunities to collaborate with each other in an interdisciplinary manner and with students and professors from other Universities in Greece and from other countries. The research conducted from the master students is disseminated through various channels which range from faculty-wide announcements to presentation of relevant papers in national and international conferences.

According to the IER, the research objectives of the master's program are successfully implemented. The EEC acknowledges the wide range of community and social needs served by these educational graduate programs and the fact that individual coming from various

fields (e.g. lawyers, architects, priests, police officers, agronomists) take advantage of these opportunities take advantage of these opportunities and bring benefits to their sectors of the community. The EEC also realizes the hard work undertaken by faculty members to meet the needs of those programs.

However, the EEC is concerned with the large number of students for each member of the academic staff, and the heavy responsibility of supervision such a large number theses. The EEC has also noticed the great variability in quality of theses, while the average grade point averages on graduation are extremely high overall.

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

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

Conclusions and recommendations of the EEC on:

- The development of the Department to this date and its present situation, including explicit comments on good practices and weaknesses identified through the External Evaluation process and recommendations for improvement:
- The Department's readiness and capability to change/improve
- The Department's quality assurance.

In the IER and during the site visit the EEC found the following to be *strong elements* of the DE.PS.E.E.D:

1. The development of educational design competencies in DE.PS.E.E.D's coursework provides its graduates with a strong preparation for systematically approaching a wide variety of educational issues and challenges.
2. The DE.PS.E.E.D prepares students to become effective pre-school teachers in a multicultural, technologically advanced society.'
3. The considerable number of graduates of the DE.PS.E.E.D who successfully participate in the Master and the PhD program of the DE.PS.E.E.D as well as in graduate programs of other Universities in Greece and abroad.
4. The considerable number of academics participating in conferences irrespective of the lack of financial support.
5. The development of strong collaborations with a wide range of social, cultural and

productive organisations.

6. The collaboration of the academic staff of the DE.PS.E.E.D in running research projects and publishing joint papers disseminating the results of these projects.
7. The fact that academic staff encourages students to participate in research projects and that a relatively high number of students is involved in projects of the DE.PS.E.E.D.
8. The extensive efforts of the faculty to respond to the needs of large number of students, irrespective of deficient infrastructure (e.g., computer and science labs)
9. The wide range of extra-curricular activities offered
10. The efficient and enthusiastic contributions of administrative and technical personnel under difficult conditions.

The EEC found the DE.PS.E.E.D to be *challenged* in terms of:

1. Being situated in an island the DE.PS.E.E.D must continue to find ways of attracting academics and students;
2. The inadequacy of facilities, presents an inhibition to quality teaching and learning;
3. The budget constraints relating to staffing, resources, infrastructure, and teaching and learning materials, access to the library all require additional effort to produce the expected learning and research outcomes of the DE.PS.E.E.D
4. Insufficient conceptual and organizational structure in the PhD studies
5. Absence of a systematic academic counselling system.
6. Limited mobility of student and academic staff
7. Over demanding academic workload for students
8. Confusion created by continual changes in legislation

The EEC expresses deep appreciation for the contribution of the DE.PS.E.E.D to this evaluation and wishes them every success in their future development. Accordingly, having completed this review and given due consideration to the findings, the EEC recommends the following for the attention and redress by the Ministry of Education, the UoA and the DE.PS.E.E.D.

**The EEC recommends that:**



**1. Extensive work needs to be done in restructuring the curriculum and the program of study (at undergraduate level).**

1.1 Develop a research and competency based program for educators based on the Departments educational design model including:

1.1.1 Identifying critical professional competencies in design, implementation and evaluation

1.1.2 Testing and refining the program through on going empirical research

1.1.3 Continuous program improvement through sharing of methods and results with the international research community

1.1.4 Sharing methods and results with the international research community

1.1.5 Becoming a world centre for developing such educational professionals

**1.2** Course offerings need to be evaluated in an ongoing fashion so that they most efficiently lead to the realization of the department's broad objectives

**1.3** Exemplary educational materials for pre-school education should be developed with an emphasis on educational design aspect

**2. The DE.PS.E.E.D should redesign the program of undergraduate studies taking into account the rationale of the ECTS approach.**

2.1. Describe the courses following the ECTS format by more analytically indicating learning outcomes, workload, subject matter, evaluation procedures and bibliography.

2.2. Reallocate ECTS in the current course offerings. This can result in a reduction in the number of required courses.

2.3. Structure the program of study by semester in such a way that it becomes evident which courses are prerequisites of others

**3. The program of graduate studies should be redesigned taking into account the following:**

3.1 The need for explicit standards of quality that faculty and students will use in developing, evaluating and grading theses in each program

3.2 The total number of students accepted each year into graduate programs must accord with what is feasible in providing all necessary services to students.

3.3 A PhD program of studies should be developed that is characterized by the following:

- 3.3.1 A clear philosophy of PhD studies with goals, procedures and methods of evaluation
- 3.3.2 Seminars/courses for research methods and specialized topics
- 3.3.3 Promotion of activities that will lead to integration of the program with the international research community
- 3.3.4 Standards of Quality for dissertations and procedures for applying the standards uniformly
- 3.3.5 The total number of students accepted each year into the PhD program must accord with what is feasible in providing all necessary services to students.

**4. The Ministry of Education has to provide the financial means to the DE.PS.E.E.D for appointing academics and supporting research.**

- 3.1. The number of courses and the student-teacher ratio requires additional academic personnel especially in areas that are not well covered in the current program of study.
- 3.2. Academics and PhD students should be entitled to financial support in order to present their research findings in well-respected international conferences

**5. The DE.PS.E.E.D has to develop mechanisms to monitor the effective implementation of the curriculum.**

- 5.1 A maximum number of students per-course should be established.
- 5.2 Academic advisors should be actively involved in guiding students in selecting their courses and dealing more effectively with the demands of each course.

**6. The inadequate facilities must be addressed as a matter of urgency.**

- 6.1 The Ministry of Education should provide the necessary means so that the Department can overcome inadequacies in facilities.
- 6.2 The DE.PS.E.E.D should enrich its library with more up to date teaching material, books, international journals and other educational electronic material. On line facilities for the faculty staff and students should also be provided.

**7. The DE.PS.E.E.D should develop a policy and take actions to improve the quality of student assessment.**

7.1 In addition to examinations given for purposes of program admission, completion and grading, faculty should conduct ongoing formative assessment of the extent to which students are attaining the course's learning objectives and use that information for program improvement.

**8. The EEC recommends that the DE.PS.E.E.D should take actions to promote research in education:**

8.1 Give more emphasis to basic research that will make a significant contribution to theory development and testing, as well as to upgrading of the research status of the DE.PS.E.E.D.

8.2 Encourage international dissemination of research findings.

8.3 Collect information on the publication and citation record of each faculty member and upload them on its web page.

8.4 Establish an Internal Human Research Ethics Committee charged with the oversight and decision-making of all research in the Department

8.5 Set up and employ internal standards for assessing the quality of faculty and student research.

**9. Budget constraints on staffing to be addressed.**

9.1 The number of faculty, administrative and technical staff must be increased to adequately support the work of the Department

9.2 The Administration of the UoA must support the Secretariat staff in personal career development so that they can fulfill their mission to provide high quality services to the students and the academic staff as the IER indicates.

## The Members of the Committee

Name and Surname

1. Prof George Philipou (Coordinator) .....
2. Dr Michalinos Zembylas .....
3. Dr Paul Zachos .....