



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ

**A.D.I.P.**

ΑΡΧΗ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ & ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ  
ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΣΤΗΝ ΑΝΩΤΑΤΗ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗ

HELLENIC REPUBLIC

**H.Q.A.**

HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE  
AND ACCREDITATION AGENCY

## **EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT**

**DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY**

**IONIAN UNIVERSITY**



**European Union  
European Social Fund**



OPERATIONAL PROGRAMME  
**EDUCATION AND LIFELONG LEARNING**  
*investing in knowledge society*

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION & RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS, CULTURE & SPORTS  
MANAGING AUTHORITY

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**External Evaluation Committee**

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

1. Professor Anthony Kaldellis (coordinator)  
The Ohio State University, USA
2. Vice-President and Lecturer Emilos Solomou  
University of Nicosia, Cyprus
3. Professor Catherine Abadie-Reynal  
Université Lumière Lyon II, France
4. Professor Torsten Mattern  
Universität Trier, Germany
5. Dean and Associate Professor George Kazamias  
University of Cyprus, Cyprus

**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 wishes to thank the Department of History of the Ionian University for the professional and efficient way in which it organized the committee’s visit and handled its many requests and questions.

### **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 had a briefing session at HQA headquarters in Athens on 17 February, traveled to Corfu that afternoon, and was met by the chair of the department at the airport. The committee was welcomed by the vice-rector Mr. Katsios at the Rectorate and then met with the internal evaluation committee of the department in the office of the chair of the department. For the next two days we followed the schedule prepared by the department and HQA, which included meeting with the faculty and students, discussions of all aspects of the department’s life (curriculum, teaching, research, and future prospects), and visits to the classroom, laboratories, offices, and the library. On Thursday and Friday, 20 and 21 February, the committee met to compose its report.

Most of the meetings were with the internal evaluation committee, who bore the brunt of the work involved in the evaluation exercise. We also met with a large representative group of students, both undergraduate and post-graduate (including doctoral students), and interviewed or had discussions with approximately half the faculty or more, of all ranks; also with the administrative staff, the head librarian, the ERASMUS coordinator, and the central secretariat of the university. The internal evaluation committee accommodated our every request for additional meetings, quickly and efficiently, and we made a point of meeting with every party privately, that is without the presence of any member of the internal evaluation committee. The committee was provided with abundant documentation regarding most aspects of the program.

All the PowerPoint presentations that we were shown were in Greek, and many of the oral presentations too. The presenting faculty could and did speak in English when required; part of the time, the external evaluation committee provided its own simultaneous translation.

After the committee finished drafting its report, a brief presentation of its findings was made to the chair of the department.

### **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 internal evaluation committee provided full documentation about the activities of the department. They provided reports and data relating to the course schedules, to the content of courses taught, to research, including publications and the activities of the laboratories, and administration. The department was willing to provide any data that we asked for and that was available to them. Detailed PowerPoint presentations had been prepared to brief us on department activities. We are satisfied with the quantity and quality of the data provided, especially so considering that this was the first time that the department underwent an external evaluation. The department's own internal evaluation, provided to us in advance, was thorough and provided a solid foundation for our subsequent visit.

## A. Curriculum

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

### APPROACH

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

This is the only pure department of History among all Greek universities. It is not coupled with another discipline (e.g., archaeology or ethnography), and it exists outside the framework of a School of Letters (*Philosophiki Scholi*). The department is explicitly aware of this fact and seeks to build on it as a strength. It has incorporated in its curriculum the methods and approaches of the social sciences (e.g., economic history, history of mentalities) and both traditional and New History. It also devotes a relatively substantial part of the curriculum to non-Greek and non-European history (including North and South American history). Modern language instruction and training in computer skills are auxiliary parts of the program.

The department has also given much thought to its pedagogical goals and the training of its students. Specifically, the curriculum aims to expose students to critical thinking in history from a relatively early stage, to include them in research activities, such as writing research papers and data collection and analysis, and to prepare them for teaching in schools but also for other professional fields such as in libraries archives. The department maintains a proactive relationship with the broader societal institutions in which their students and graduates may be employed. The rationale behind this curriculum is to provide a rigorous academic training while at the same time preparing students for a variety of professional opportunities outside the school and university world. To this degree the department has attempted to accommodate the projected needs of students in a rapidly changing environment.

These general principles apply also to the department's postgraduate programs, only these are more specialized in specific areas. The three current programs, focusing on archival sources, new technologies in teaching, and historical demography, also aim to train students in professionally useful skills, which can be applied to occupations outside the traditional pedagogical fields.

The external evaluation committee found that the curriculum as implemented is consistent with its goals. Also, the department is evidently engaged in a detailed, serious, and ongoing internal discussion about curriculum issues. We were presented with a number of viewpoints about how it might be adjusted to meet future needs, indicating that the department is actively looking for ways to improve the curriculum, and their internal discussions seem to us to be constructive, inclusive, and fair. The forum for these internal discussions is the general faculty meetings, with input from the relevant department committees.

### 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 schedule of courses in the undergraduate program is rationally designed, according to the goals set by the curriculum, and it takes student needs into consideration as far as possible. The schedule is posted outside the department offices and is available online. Students commented favourably that the schedule of courses and examinations was adhered to rigorously. Students begin by taking a greater number of introductory courses and take fewer, more intensive courses as they progress through the program. More basic learning is emphasized in the beginning, whereas the acquisition of specific research and pedagogical skills is emphasized after the second year. By their third and fourth years students are participating in the activities of the research laboratories, in the Practical Exercises, and in the teaching internships in local schools. Based on our experience of teaching in five different universities, this progression makes sense, and it also seems to be liked by the students themselves.

The materials used in courses are appropriate and include textbooks, additional resources posted online, the critical use of internet sources, archival collections maintained (in part by the students themselves) in the department's research laboratories, site visits, and films. Our discussion with the students indicates that the introductory courses are somewhat easier, requiring less work and reading, and the more advanced seminar courses are more work-intensive. There were no complaints about this distribution of the work load across the program, and there seem to be no problems with the amount of work assigned in the time given for each course.

Given the difficult economic conditions of the Greek university system, the department is implementing its curriculum to the best of its ability. The faculty are appropriately and well chosen for the needs of the curriculum. Potential hires and replacements are discussed strategically in terms of the curriculum. The faculty also take on teaching and advising responsibilities above and beyond their required hours of teaching, as and when required. This indicates a strong commitment to the success of the program. Students were emphatic that faculty were regularly available for consultation, beyond even the posted office hours. The same generally applies to the MA programs, only here access to library and other research resources is more critical to the success of the three programs. Here the budget cuts suffered by the library in recent years were commented on by students as posing difficulties to the completion of their studies.

## RESULTS

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

The external evaluation committee has no doubt that by completing the undergraduate program a student will acquire a sound knowledge of history (local, national, and global) at the university level. Especially noteworthy is the expertise gained in areas such as economic and maritime history, in addition to more traditional areas taught in most Greek universities.

The program also provides training in a number of important critical skills in the evaluation of sources and the production and evaluation of historical data in archives or museums. By encouraging their students to think critically about the methodologies of knowledge, faculty also impart to students valuable soft skills, for example related to problem-solving, which can be applied in non-university contexts as well.

One of the successful aspects of the program is the Practical Exercise, which has been completed by 157 students so far. Having examined the folder of official reports by the host institutions, we were impressed by the diversity of activities that they undertook, in a wide variety of places and institutions (mainly in the region of NW Greece, but also abroad). This program also requires an extraordinary amount of work on the part of its faculty supervisors, and should be credited toward their service or advising responsibilities.

Teacher-training is systematically integrated into the program. All students are expected to observe and then participate in local school teaching, and they are advised through this process by a specialist member of staff. This accounts for one course in the curriculum, and offers valuable experience in light of potential future employment.

#### **IMPROVEMENT**

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

The department is monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the curriculum. At this point, they understand that the curriculum cannot be improved by adding courses. Fifty-eight courses are required to complete it, and there is a general sense that this number may be reduced in the future. More students are admitted to the program than the department asks for, sometimes even double the number. Approximately a third of those students transfer to different universities, and a certain number do not regularly attend courses or take exams on time. Also, there is no option for students to attend university on a part-time basis. These factors result in a low “on time” completion rate and also make it difficult to track the overall progress of students through the program; but this is obviously due to reasons external to the department’s implementation of its curriculum. Implementation of the recent K + 2 rule (on time graduation plus two years) is expected to clear up much of this backlog.

The department has proposed two new MA programs, in Classical Studies and Defense and Strategic Studies. There is a debate currently in the department about whether the various MA programs should be integrated into a single program with multiple tracks (the Y model), or kept as separate programs. We trust the department to make this decision on its own, considering its own long-term development.

## B. Teaching

### APPROACH:

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

Please comment on :

- Teaching methods used
- Teaching staff/ student ratio
- Teacher/student collaboration
- Adequacy of means and resources
- Use of information technologies
- Examination system

Teaching methods range from lecturing to large groups (in the introductory courses) to smaller seminar courses emphasizing discussions and one-on-one advising. We found the teaching methods to be appropriate to the type of course in each case. Discussions between faculty and students can also take place in the large lecture courses, and more specialized, hands-on instruction takes place in the research laboratories. The staff/student ratio is very good, with approximately 20 staff for an incoming cohort of about 150, which diminishes over time. We believe there is a very good atmosphere of collaboration between students and faculty. We met with a group of about 70 students of all levels and they were favourable about the amount of contact time they had with the faculty, deeming it one of the advantages of the program.

The department has adequate and suitable classrooms and other facilities. The buildings are new and have been maintained in very good order. The facilities do not appear to have been vandalized and are kept clean by the students as well. The respect shown by students for the facilities indicates a high degree of identification with the program and its educational goals. All but one of the classrooms have digital projectors. Some faculty use the projectors to access internet sources in the classroom, including short films, to instruct students in their critical use. There are also four specialized laboratories, fairly well equipped, that are used to good effect in combining research with teaching. We were positively impressed with the state of the department's facilities.

One challenge faced by the department, in both its teaching and research, is the limited ability of the university library to cover the department's needs. The students themselves noted that they obtain books with difficulty and sometimes delay, as the stacks are not accessible, and that the holdings are somewhat limited and outdated in certain areas. Delays in cataloguing exacerbate these issues. The faculty make use of the e-class platform to make readings available for course use, but this can compensate for the library deficiencies only up to a point.

The examination system varies by course. In the introductory courses, there is more emphasis on the traditional written exam. Our inspection of a sample of them found them to be sufficiently challenging and presupposing an adequate and even detailed grasp of the material. Upper-level courses required classroom presentations and research papers in addition to written examinations, as is appropriate. Participation in classroom discussion is encouraged in those courses. The department faculty seem to have a coherent and consistent overall approach to the grading systems.

The PhD program does not at present involve teaching in formal courses.

### IMPLEMENTATION

Please comment on:

- Quality of teaching procedures
- Quality and adequacy of teaching materials and resources.
- Quality of course material. Is it brought up to date?
- Linking of research with teaching
- Mobility of academic staff and students
- Evaluation by the students of (a) the teaching and (b) the course content and study material/resources

Our visit to the department as approved by HQA, did not provide for classroom observation and did not include first-hand inspection of teaching practice. We did, however, encounter a department strongly committed to teaching and a student body that appreciated that fact. Students in this program benefit from more extensive attention by faculty than would be possible at a larger university, an opportunity well understood by all parties in the department. As for the textbooks that are used, the list of those assigned for the current academic year reflects an up-to-date bibliography, published or translated into Greek during the past decade, and also some established classical works of older scholarship.

One of the strengths of the program is the intersection of research and teaching, and the way in which the one is used to reinforce the other. Students, especially in the later years of the program, are expected to produce research papers, and all of them must produce a final-year project (*ptychiaki ergasia*). The nexus for much of this research are the laboratories, which are structured around the interests of some of the faculty and rely on student volunteers for the organization and production of material. Some of these students generate research projects in that context, and this extends to some of the post-graduate students as well.

Mobility for academic staff for teaching purposes is relatively limited to some courses taught in other Greek universities. There is by contrast a large number of incoming speakers who have lectured on a wide variety of topics, including some very distinguished foreign professors. This is a positive experience for the students.

Student outgoing mobility used to be satisfactory, but has dropped off in recent years; this is attributed to a variety of reasons (for example financial reasons, but language skills are cited as an important factor). The university's ERASMUS network is substantial, resulting in approximately 100 students per year coming to Corfu (for the whole university), 22 of which to the department specifically over a six year period; 13 department students have traveled abroad through the same program in the same period. Department faculty go beyond their normal teaching duties by offering some courses in English for foreign students and have prepared an ERASMUS+ package, consisting of a full program in English, a partial program in French, and one course in German.

Student evaluations of teaching and the program took two forms: the questionnaires that they fill out for each course, and our interview with them. The information from the questionnaires is provided in pp. 81-87 of the department's internal evaluation. This date is aggregated there in such a way that it makes identifying specific trends or patterns difficult. Nevertheless, it appears that students have strikingly positive views of faculty teaching and of the efforts of the department to advance their education. They have less positive views of the efficiency with which textbooks are delivered to them, but this is not the department's fault. Also, we should note that the questionnaire confusingly uses the term *phrontesterion* to refer to upper-level undergraduate seminar courses. As we discovered in our interview with the students, when filling out the questionnaires they take the word to have its common meaning, i.e., the private after-school tutorials that they have come to hate. This explains their extremely negative reactions in those questions. When asked their view of the seminars in question, they were very positive. We propose that this confusion be corrected in the

design of the questionnaire.

## RESULTS

Please comment on:

- Efficacy of teaching.
- 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.
- Whether the Department understands the reasons of such positive or negative results?

Assessing the efficacy of teaching is difficult to do in any case, even when abundant data has been gathered through various tracking mechanisms. The data generated for HQA departmental evaluations is not sufficient to answer this question in a methodical way. The only data that exist on the undergraduate side are statistics about the numbers of students that have passed a course, and the grades with which they have passed or failed. But these numbers exist in a context where students can retake an exam until they have passed, which presumably affects the way in which exams are given and how students prepare for exams. This is not a context with which this committee is familiar. If HQA wants reliable and meaningful assessments of teaching efficacy, long-term procedures must be implemented to gather the relevant data.

There is one observable discrepancy in the success or failure percentages: a relatively low percentage of students pass each course every time an exam is given (which seems to be normal in the Greek system), but a high percentage, even 100%, pass certain types of courses, specifically the “auxiliary” courses in the foreign languages, especially English, and computer skills. It was explained to us that these courses are generally easy and can be used to boost grade-point averages.

The average time to graduation in this program is 5.3 years, so above the “normal” time of four years. There is no data from which to draw conclusions about which types of students graduate on time and which do not; nor is there data regarding the reasons for delay. From our discussions with the students, the workload associated with each course does not seem to be a problem. The number of courses required for graduation may be an issue, and has been identified by the department as an area of potential reform (fewer courses may enable more students to graduate on time). The average time to graduate may also be disproportionately affected by a small number of students who have been registered for a very long time, a problem that will be cleared up when they are stricken off the rolls.

There are no anomalies in the distribution of the final grades. There also appears to be no grade inflation, which is a good sign. The final grades of MA students are consistently high, but this can be explained by the fact that such students are often highly motivated and personally interested in the material.

Graduation rates for the MA programs were good (between two thirds and three fourths) in two of the three active programs (Historical Demography; and Historical Research, Pedagogy, and New Technologies). There is a problem, however, in the graduation rates for the program on the Methodology of the Criticism and Edition of Historical Sources, which have often been unusually low, sometimes even zero (out of ten or more students). This program is now under new direction and will hopefully improve its graduation rates.

As for the doctoral graduate option, the department has so far seen through to completion 62 PhD theses since the introduction of the option. There are currently 97 doctoral candidates, three of whom came to speak with the external evaluation committee. It is not

clear how many of all the current candidates are actively working on their dissertations, and the number of 97 seems high both to the committee and to the members of the faculty. The current framework of graduate studies restricts each doctoral advisor to 5 advisees, so this will presumably reduce the overall number of candidates. It is not clear how much of this “backlog” will result in actual dissertations.

#### IMPROVEMENT

- Does the Department propose methods and ways for improvement?
- What initiatives does it take in this direction?

Each MA program must have a director, but there is a history in the department of each program being directed by one person for a very long time. It is advisable for these directorships to be rotated among the faculty on a periodic basis; the external evaluation committee suggest that the director may also be advised by a committee, whose faculty members could then become directors in turn.

The department has indicated a wish to initiate a review of backlogged dissertations in order to evaluate which candidates are making progress toward completion. Individual advisors have already begun to take steps in this direction, on an individual basis.

Additional future plans by the department are discussed in section E of this report, and additional recommendations by the external evaluation committee are presented in section F below.

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

All faculty in the department are expected to maintain active programs of individual and/or collaborative research. This includes research in the various laboratories run by the department and also publication in Greek and foreign academic venues. The department values the different types of research pursued by the faculty, and accepts and encourages all types of nationally or internationally recognized scholarly work. Maintaining an active presence at national and international conferences is also encouraged, as is applying for grants. The standards by which the department evaluates research do not differ from universally accepted norms. As per Greek law, promotions within the department are at least in part dependent upon continued publication.

### IMPLEMENTATION

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

The university and the department do not seem to have the means to provide financial research support. Members of the faculty are entitled to sabbaticals and also seek outside funding (see below). In the view of the external evaluation committee, the department has created a healthy environment of moral support and encouragement for research. It is understood and expected that faculty should be engaged in original research. Publications, projects, and collaborations are discussed below, under Results.

The external evaluation committee sees a problem in that the university lacks a proper research library. The existing library contains few books, barely adequate for teaching and inadequate for the research needs and ambitions of the faculty, and has not had the funds to order books in four years. A sum has been allocated recently through European funding, but it is still inadequate and has been divided equally among all the departments, even though their need for library resources is perhaps not equal. The faculty are fully aware of the overall library problem, which hampers their scholarly productivity. The library also needs specialized area librarians who can fulfil the ordering priorities set by the faculty.

### 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 external evaluation committee finds that the research output of the department meets and exceeds the standards expected of a fully active university program in history. There are

no unproductive members of the faculty. Their publications include monographs, edited volumes, chapters in collective volumes, articles in peer-reviewed and editor-reviewed journals, popularizing works, and articles in the national and local press. Some are in foreign languages and are cited by other scholars in other languages. Also, some of the faculty pursue individual projects while others engage in collaborative work with colleagues in other departments and other countries.

Members of the faculty are very successful at securing external research grants from state funding agencies and programs, including Pythagoras I and II and Thalis (twice), and also from private sources (Alpha Bank and Agrotiki Bank). Of seven Thalis projects given to history-related projects in Greece, two were awarded to department faculty, and another member of the department is collaborating in a third Thalis project. Provision has also been made in past and current projects for the participation of MA and PhD students, and it is expected that they will draw their research material from them. The committee did not have exact figures for the number of such students. The size and scope of some of these projects is impressive, as is the network of international collaboration they both entail. We believe that this should be emphasized and should be a source of pride for the department.

One of the starting points for the research of some of the faculty are the four laboratories maintained by the department, namely of the Documentation of Contemporary History; Information Technology; Historical Documentation of the Mediterranean World; History of Greek-British Relations; and Study of the Ancient World. These laboratories are put to good use in the research training of undergraduate and MA students, and intersect with the interests of the faculty. This is an innovative instrument to combine research and teaching, and we recommend that funding be secured for these laboratories. They are also used to collect and process data relating to these fields, which, while not published as such, is used and built upon by students in their research who thereby develop their own skills.

While the department maintains close links with local institutions and archives, especially for the purpose of training MA students, it also has an active scholarly presence on the national and international stage.

#### **IMPROVEMENT**

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

The external evaluation committee finds that the department has a strong track record of producing published scholarship; the department made no proposals to the committee regarding the improvement of its research projects.

## **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 department appreciated the work done by the administrative and secretarial staff on its behalf and expressed strong views about the reduction of personnel due to the financial crisis and the increased work burden placed on those who remain in active service.

The department webpage contains much useful information for the students, and the students expressed satisfaction with the electronic communications that they receive from the department, including the schedule of courses and grades. Many administrative procedures are handled electronically in the campus management system, and the only hard-copy paperwork is that required by law. Records were kept competently and efficiently; there was no clutter in the secretaries' offices.

The students' contact time with the faculty and the campus is increased by the viewing of films in an academic framework of critical analysis and discussion, which is a component of one of the research laboratories (Documenting the Modern World), and by hosting lectures by guest speakers.

### 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.).

There are two permanent secretaries, one in charge of student affairs and the other of faculty affairs and other, internally defined duties. There is an administrator of the ERASMUS program (for the whole university), and an IT officer for the department.

Students have access to the university library, which is directly next to the department; they also have access to computer labs and to a WiFi signal throughout the campus. The campus visit of the external evaluation committee as defined by HQA did not make provision for the inspection of student counselling services, athletic-cultural activities, or the IT center of the university.

### RESULTS

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

Secretarial staff appears to be very committed but also hard pressed by the amount of work that is expected of them under current conditions. Cuts have reduced staff by over a third and this poses the danger that student services may be negatively impacted. This should be addressed now before the effects begin to show for both staff and students. The department shares this view of the matter. The rest of the services appear to be running smoothly (ERASMUS and IT), but both students and faculty had complains about library

services, including its limited materials and the access that it provides to existing materials.

The secretaries maintain a thorough database which tracks student progress through the program.

#### **IMPROVEMENTS**

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

There is little that the department can do at this point to shape the work conditions and efficiency of the secretarial services, beyond the moral support that they provide. It is up to the central authorities to provide the necessary resources.

The external evaluation committee appreciates that the limitations in library services is due to severe budget cuts. On the other hand, we encourage the library staff and faculty to meet and collaborate so that research and access needs are met in a more efficient way. Faculty and student priorities should be the first to be taken into account.

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

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

The department's collaboration with social and cultural organizations include (but are not limited to) the student internship program in local schools; the Practical Exercise which has sent 157 undergraduate students so far to a wide variety of social and cultural institutions; MA theses written on the basis of local archives, on which much work remains to be done; and outreach through public lectures given by the faculty on matters of local interest.

The department maintains a wide range of professional collaborations with a variety of institutions (e.g., museums, antiquities' ephorates, local archives, libraries, municipalities, etc.) all over Greece and abroad. These cover diverse areas and are well integrated with the needs and activities of the department, both teaching and research. It is through this network that the department can and does organize a successful placement program, by providing valuable work and/or academic experience to students, while at the same time promoting local history as well as serving local needs. The department is also aware of the potential for collaborating with private business.

The external evaluation committee was impressed by the degree to which this department is self-consciously proactive in its engagement with non-university organizations.

## **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.
- Plan and actions for improvement by the Department/Academic Unit
- Long-term actions proposed by the Department.

The external evaluation committee was briefed by the chair of the department about the department's future plans, and references were made throughout the visit to various pending proposals and aspirations.

The framework of public administration in Greece is at present in such a state of change and flux that it is difficult to make plans. The question of university reorganization has to settle before departments can confidently move forward with implementing their own plans. A number of uncertainties, such as the laborious process of obtaining official recognition of new programs and the time it takes to implement any idea, inhibit the actual realization of departmental plans. This is, of course, in addition to the general lack of funding.

The department's plans are orientated along two main axes, teaching and increasing links with local society.

Undergraduate teaching, short-term plans: the department is considering a reform of the curriculum that may involve a reduction in the number of courses required for graduation. It is also interested in developing foreign-language courses (in English, French, and German) for ERASMUS + students (foreign-language instruction has already taken place on an informal basis).

Postgraduate teaching, short-term plans: the department has proposed two new MA programs (as mentioned above), in Classical Studies and in Defence and Strategic Studies. There is also a plan to obtain official recognition (preferably with funding) for the laboratories that the department operates.

Undergraduate teaching, medium-term plans: these include collaboration with other departments within the university around themes of common interest, such as the modern language and translation programs and the archivist training program. This collaboration could extend to the postgraduate level, and could result in dual-degree specialization (if allowed).

Postgraduate teaching, medium-term plans: the department is interested in developing a formal seminar for doctoral instruction. At present, doctoral work in the department involves only the writing of the dissertation.

In the long term, the department wants to strengthen its teaching of local history by offering lectures on issues of local interest; establish a unit of life-long learning; organize e-learning programs; strengthen its ties with the other Ionian islands, especially the TEI on Cephalonia; and establish two Experimental Schools (*Peiramatika*), one on Corfu and one on Cephalonia, in which the faculty will be actively involved (and which could produce future students for the university itself).

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

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

Conclusions and recommendations of the EEC on:

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

The Department of History of the Ionian University has developed into a successful, well-functioning academic unit. Faculty are strongly committed to teaching and research and have created a constructive and professional atmosphere for themselves and their students. The department is monitoring its own performance and displays a willingness to consider various options for improvement for the benefit of the program and the students, and this in a program that is already good. The following recommendations by the committee should be taken within that framework.

The external evaluation committee also recommends to HQA that a full assessment of an academic department's success requires at least two additional sets of data that are not, at present, available. Specifically, there needs to be more detailed information about the socio-economic and regional background of its students and their placement and employment history after graduation. There are also no follow-up surveys of student satisfaction at set intervals after graduation.

### **Curriculum and teaching**

The department has an innovative teaching program at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels and needs to make only minor adjustments. The department is proposing limiting the number of required courses, but they should proceed with caution. Student workload may be adjusted in other ways too, for example by calibrating the ECTS units allocated to each course or by recognizing individual study as part of the workload.

The undergraduate program includes the auxiliary components of foreign language and computer training, but it did not seem to the evaluation committee that intensive use was made of the resources and expertise provided by the other departments of the university that specialize in those areas. Foreign language use and aptitude on the part of the students should be developed to a higher level than they seem to be. The department may consider integrating the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) as a mechanism for defining aptitude levels in the foreign languages. Also, the department regularly employs the term New Technologies, but it is not clear what is new about them. Still, it is very positive that the department is open in principle to using new technologies for promoting historical teaching and scholarship. They are forward-thinking in this way.

Students asked that exams not be scheduled too densely together (many on a single day, for example), even when exams have to be scheduled under extraordinary circumstances. They also ask that grades be posted earlier, especially when they have to sign up for the "next" course not knowing whether they have passed the previous one. But this appears to have been due to the same extraordinary circumstances of the past year.

The department is regularly sent more students than it asks for: there should be a mutually acceptable compromise number of incoming students that accounts for the department's capacity for teaching them.

Our discussion with the postgraduate students indicates that some of them feel intellectually isolated as they write their theses (MA or PhD). Holding workshops at set

intervals where students can present their work-in-progress and receive feedback from their peers and the faculty can offset and ameliorate the effects of research isolation. This would also create a more stimulating intellectual environment for them. Undergraduate students can also be invited to such meetings for their own benefit.

The external evaluation committee strongly recommends that the department introduce explicit guidelines about the length and scope of MA theses. We saw some completed theses that were very large, and some students indicated that, in the absence of explicit guidelines, MA theses tended to expand and thereby take more time to complete.

We support the department's plan to institute a formal doctoral program(s).

The external evaluation committee recommends to the HQA and the ministry that a framework be developed for part-time studies, allowing students to take more time to finish their degree. For example, many students have to work, including almost all postgraduate students, and this is not taken into account in the current framework of higher education. Such a framework would help regularize the backlog of students who have not yet finished, while keeping them active in their studies.

### **Research**

The external evaluation committee is satisfied with the research performance of the department at the local, national, and international level. For our report on their research activities, see section C above.

### **Services**

To improve the library and departmental holdings, the department is encouraged to initiate a program of publication exchange with other academic organizations. In this way, *Ionios Logos* and other publications (e.g., of the laboratories) could reach other libraries, and vice versa. This is not to be confused with the interlibrary loan program.

The departments of the university and the library should form a common committee to set acquisitions priorities and not merely "consult" on library matters. Currently, faculty recommendations do not seem to be reaching the level of acquisition policy.

The department secretaries maintain detailed information about each student's progress. While this is good, they do not need to record some aspects of personal information. The department needs to have only academic information and not, for example, religious affiliation or family status.

### **Strategic Plan**

The external evaluation committee has commented on specific aspects of the department's strategic plan in section E of this report. In general, the committee views the plan as very positive but also rather ambitious. We expect that they will prioritize and pace the implementation of their future projects in a way that is consistent with their workload capacity.

The Members of the Committee

Name and Surname	Signature
1. Anthony Kaldellis	
2. Emiliос Solomou	
3. Catherine Abadie-Reynal	
4. Torsten Mattern	
5. George Kazamias	