



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ

HELLENIC REPUBLIC

Α.ΔΙ.Π.

H.Q.A.

ΑΡΧΗ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ & ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ
ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΣΤΗΝ ΑΝΩΤΑΤΗ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗ

HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE
AND ACCREDITATION AGENCY

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

DEPARTMENT: SCHOOL OF GERMAN LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE

UNIVERSITY: ARISTOTLE UNIVERSITY OF THESSALONIKI



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MINISTRY OF EDUCATION & RELIGIOUS AFFAIRS, CULTURE & SPORTS
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External Evaluation Committee

The Committee responsible for the External Evaluation of the Department of German Language and Literature of the University/Technological Educational Institution of Thessaloniki consisted of the following three (3) expert evaluators drawn from the Registry constituted by the HQA in accordance with Law 3374/2005:

1. Dr Stavroula Constantinou (Coordinator)
Associate Professor of Byzantine Studies

University of Cyprus, Cyprus

2. Prof. Diether Hopf
Max Planck-Institute for Human Development, Berlin
and Department of Education

Universität Potsdam, Germany

3. Dr Androulla Papakyriakou
Assistant Professor of Linguistics

University of Nicosia, 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

I. The External Evaluation Procedure

- Dates and brief account of the site visit.

The External Evaluation Committee visited the Department of German Language and Philology at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki on December 18, 19 and 20, 2013 from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. on the first day, from 9:00 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. on the second day and from 9:30 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. on the third day.

- Whom did the Committee meet?

The Committee met with the Vice Rector, the Dean, the Head of the Department, the faculty, administrative staff, and students of the Department of German Language and Philology at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

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

a) The Internal Evaluation Reports for 2006-2010, 2011-2012 and 2012-2013, b) the List of Faculty Publications, c) the Study Guide 2011-2012, d) the website of the Department, e) various other materials regarding Faculty activities and f) the power point presentations delivered by members of the staff during the site visit. Almost all documents were provided in both Greek and German language.

- Groups of teaching and administrative staff and students interviewed

The Committee presented the Department’s functional problems to the Dean, and interviewed the Head of the Department, the teaching staff (26), the representatives of the undergraduate, M.A., and Ph.D. students (14 in all), the faculty IT specialist (1), the library staff (2) and the Department secretaries (2).

- Facilities visited by the External Evaluation Committee

The External Evaluation Committee was expected to visit the following facilities: the main building in which the Department is housed, the administrative offices, the library, the Department’s research centre, and the faculty offices. Unfortunately, the Committee was able to see only one of the secretary offices. The other visits could not take place because the Student Union of the School of Philosophy (Φιλοσοφική Σχολή) had a sit in (κατάληψη). There were also students who were against the evaluation procedure, and they tried to block it.

II. The Internal Evaluation Procedure

Please comment on:

- Appropriateness of sources and documentation used

The data provided to the Committee were very appropriate. All supplementary information requested by the Committee was promptly provided.

- Quality and completeness of evidence reviewed and provided

Most materials were of the best quality, detailing the history and activities of the Department. They included almost all necessary information and data for a valid judgment to be formed.

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

The objectives of the internal evaluation process were met to a great extent. It is obvious that the Internal Evaluation Reports were prepared under extremely difficult circumstances. The three members of the External Evaluation Committee recognize and appreciate the careful thought and hard work that went into preparations for their visit. They are also grateful for the kindness and warm hospitality shown by the Head of the Department, teaching staff, administrators and students. The strong attendance and lively discussions at the various meetings were further indications of the Department's investment in the evaluation process. All in all, the External Evaluation Committee was impressed by the strong team spirit and commitment that characterizes the members of the Department.

At this point, the three members of the External Evaluation Committee would like to make the following clarification. It has been stated in the Guidelines for the Members of External Evaluation Committees that "The purpose of this external assessment is to define whether the diverse actions of a given academic unit and the ensuing results are consistent with its predefined plan. Also, whether this plan is appropriate for the accomplishment of the unit's objectives; finally, whether the plan is effectively implemented, thus ensuring the accomplishment of the academic unit's goals and the improvement of its quality" (p.3).

As we see it from our perspective as researchers in the Humanities and Social Sciences, this purpose can only be partly achieved. As far as the APPROACH is concerned, we are in a position to check on its feasibility, internal logic, and rationality, on the one hand, and to determine its strengths and weaknesses in comparison to other approaches in different countries, on the other.

When it comes to IMPLEMENTATION the information upon which our judgments were based is far from being complete, since we did not have the opportunity to see any implementation in situ. Therefore, we had to rely on indirect information, such as reports by staff members and students.

This is even more accurate when we get to the section on RESULTS. Due to the way in which the Evaluation is processed, we did not have direct observations or other data on which to base our judgments, not to talk about causal connections between, for example, a specific approach and its results. Therefore, our proposals concerning the IMPROVEMENTS were not based on complete evidence.

What we could do was the following: to formulate our impressions in accordance with what we have seen, heard, and read as objectively as possible. Our judgments, therefore, should be read as plausible approaches to the situation.

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?
The goals of both undergraduate and graduate Curriculum are: to promote the culture of German-speaking countries, and intercultural communication in Greece, and to provide students with the knowledge and skills necessary to pursue further studies, and become employable in various domains, such as academia, education, publishing, translation and tourism.
- How were the objectives decided? Which factors were taken into account? Were they set against appropriate standards? Did the unit consult other stakeholders?
The Department decided its objectives by taking into account the Greek situation, the needs of the society in Greece, and international standards. In an attempt to achieve international standards, the Department asked Prof. Hans Bickes from the University of Hannover (Germany) to be the external evaluator of the pilot Curriculum. The Department took Prof. Bickes' remarks and suggestions into consideration when there was a restructuring and updating of the Curriculum.
- Is the curriculum consistent with the objectives of the Curriculum and the requirements of the society?
The curriculum is to a great extent consistent with the objectives of the Curriculum and the requirements of the society.
- Has the unit set a procedure for the revision of the curriculum?
The Department has set such a procedure twice between the years 2002-2006 and 2006-2010.

IMPLEMENTATION

- How effectively is the Department's goal implemented by the curriculum?
The Department's goal is effectively implemented by the Curriculum. In the last years, research has shown that effective teaching, as measured by student learning outcomes, consists of two factors: the teachers' content knowledge (CK) and pedagogical content knowledge (PCK). PCK in particular, is mainly defined as subject specific didactics and general didactics (see, for example, Baumert et al. 2010: 133-180). Seen through the perspectives of these research findings, the Curriculum of the Department may be described as a modern approach to teacher training. Through the strong emphasis on

language competence (CK) and didactics of different sort (PCK), the Department enables the students to become efficient teachers.

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

The Curriculum compares to a great extent with universally accepted standards. However, the strong emphasis on both compulsory pedagogical courses and practical training in teaching German as a foreign language is quite unusual. Most European and American Universities that offer a bachelor on German studies do not include pedagogical courses and practical training in their Curricula.

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

The structure of the Curriculum is rational and very clearly articulated.

- Is the curriculum coherent and functional?

The Curriculum is coherent and functional.

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

The teaching staff of the Department is appropriately trained and qualified to implement the Curriculum, but it is constrained by the limited resources, the lack of suitable classrooms, of a multi-media centre, and of a language laboratory, the absence of heating during cold winter days, and of cleanliness. (See section D on facilities)

RESULTS

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

The faculty members are making every effort to implement the predefined aims, and their resourcefulness and hard work are quite exceptional. However, the lack of financial support, personnel and offices, as well as the cold and inappropriate classrooms are obstructive, causing many problems.

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

The Department has an understanding of these issues. At the same time, the staff members are painfully aware of the constraints placed upon them by the problems named above.

IMPROVEMENT

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

The Department knows how the Curriculum should be further improved. In fact, the

Head of the Department has made a good suggestion on behalf of the faculty: the practical training should be extended to include other domains apart from the teaching of German as a foreign language (tourism, media, theatre, publishing, translation).

B. Teaching

APPROACH:

According to the Internal Evaluation Report for 2012-2013, the Department has nineteen faculty members. There is also an additional teaching staff of seven people. Most faculty members teach between two and three courses per semester, and on top of that they are always available to students.

At the moment, the Department has 1121 undergraduate, 53 graduate, and 18 PhD students. There is an imbalance between the number of students that specialize in linguistics and didactic and those who have literature as their specialization. Only a third of the students specialize in literature, a fact that should concern the Department. Unfortunately, many students have to slow down their studies because they have to work. In the last years, the number of students who finish their studies in four or six years has increased because they have difficulties in finding a job during their studies. Of course, the same problem occurs after graduation too.

In the student questionnaires that were answered only by 160 persons, the students declared their overall satisfaction with their lecturers and the conditions under which they work. While at the end of WS the values (of a five point scale, with 5 as the highest positive value) were slightly below 4, at the end of SS the values were higher. Their increase throughout time shows the students' growing satisfaction with their lecturers and the offered courses.

As is the case with the other Greek universities where attendance at courses is not compulsory, the Department of German Language and Philology has student attendance problems. Reportedly, class attendance is higher at the start of the semester and compulsory courses have higher attendance than electives, since they are addressed to all students. There is also a discrepancy between the number of students who attend the courses and that of the students who eventually sit the exams. The faculty is very concerned about attendance problems. In an attempt to solve the problem, all members of the staff distribute attendance lists for required electives, and they organize relevant workshops. There is an ongoing discussion concerning the feasibility of attendance requirements. In general, there is a wish for stricter control. The Department should try to find more efficient ways to motivate students who do not show up at courses. The sooner the students finish their studies, the better for the Department, since it will be possible to save more time for research.

- Teaching methods used

Teaching methods seem to vary considerably between faculty members. The Internal Evaluation Reports often refer to some sort of open education approaches in which student participation lies at the centre. Unfortunately, the External Evaluation Committee did not have the opportunity to see the realization of those approaches. Some students commented on courses, which seem to have been delivered in a rather conventional lecture format. The extreme heterogeneity of the incoming students' competence in German language asks for a variety of teaching methods and didactics. One of the innovative teaching methods used by the Department takes place within the framework of the theatre workshop in which the students have the opportunity to practise and improve their language skills. The Committee recognized the extremely good work that is done by the language lecturers. Of course, as long as the faculty members are prepared to establish an explicit link between theory and practice, there are a variety of ways through which the problem of the students' different (language) levels could be solved.

The use of digital devices for teaching purposes is an important issue for many faculty members. E-learning procedures are used, bibliography is searched electronically, and platforms, such as MOODLE and Blackboard are employed increasingly. The only exception to this trend is the absence of a language laboratory, which could be used for language training, and the refining of language competence. The Committee observed also a discrepancy between the language lecturers and some of the other members of the faculty: while the language lecturers were very much in favour of a language lab, and were aware of its importance to language learning, other faculty members doubted about its usefulness.

- Teaching staff/student ratio.

The numbers of students and faculty staff for the academic year 2012-2013 have been presented above. If we look at the development of the lecturer/student ratios a clear and increasing deterioration can be observed. While in 2006/07 857 students had to be served by 23 lecturers (ratio 1: 38), in 2012/13 the numbers were 1192 students and 26 lecturers, i.e. a ratio of 1: 46. It is evident that a continued increase of the student numbers, and at the same time a decrease of the number of faculty members would create enormous problems. In the following, it will be further indicated that the Department works past its limits. The reason why it still achieves admirable results is because each single staff member is highly engaged. In the long run, however, it will

be very difficult for the faculty members to keep a high level of teaching and research if there are no additional resources.

- Teacher/student collaboration

Compared to other universities, the teacher-student collaboration seems to be at an unusual high level. This impression was made not only from the data and the interviews with faculty members, but also from extended talks with a group of students who came from different backgrounds and had diverse experiences from the Department. All members of the teaching staff offer three fixed office hours per week. If it is deemed necessary, the students may ask for extra appointments through e-mail. The teaching staff makes every effort to answer students' e-mails promptly.

- Examination system

The evaluation task is twofold. First, there are language examinations. This is extremely important for first-year students who are divided into two groups (A and B) according to their language competence. The weaker group (B) is provided with additional language teaching during the first two years of studies (Grundstudium). The placement tests used by the Department, which follow the exam guidelines that are published by the Council for Cultural Co-operation and the Council of Europe (Europarat, Rat für kulturelle Zusammenarbeit 2001), are rather conventional. Powerful and valid instruments, such as multiple-choice items or computer assisted sequential testing, are not frequently used. Of course, it has to be pointed out that the problems with the first-year students' language competence is directly linked to the entrance exam that is designed and conducted by the Greek Ministry of Education. It is often the case that the students' language proficiency level is approximately A2 (according to CEFR) whereas the Department's prerequisite is level B2. The External Evaluation Committee noticed also that the language tests used for the transition from Grundstudium to Hauptstudium (from the third year onwards) do not always prove the students' ability to attend demanding courses and seminars that are delivered in German language during the Hauptstudium.

Second, examinations are administered during and after each lecture or seminar, aiming at proving teaching results in the different content areas. As far as the External Evaluation Committee could tell, the examination procedures are also to a certain extent conventional. Properties of the assessment instruments like objectivity, reliability and validity are not known, but the Department is highly interested in developing new forms of examination that would improve the situation. Although this

is a common finding in most universities, there is room for improvement. The possible deficits of the diagnostic instruments are counteracted in this Department by means of continuous assessment of a student's language level. Any placement errors may be repaired through this long process.

Microteaching and practica

One outstanding feature of the Department's teaching and Curriculum is the existence of microteachings and practica which are undertaken by the students towards the end of their undergraduate studies (semesters 7 and 8). The External Evaluation Committee regrets the fact that there was no opportunity to inspect the work that is done in this area. From the information we had obtained, we got a very positive impression.

The Department has been the first in the country to establish these units and to prepare the students for actual teaching. The Committee found evidence that these courses are very well accepted and estimated by a number of students. Because of the intensive supervision, it is necessary that the student-teacher ratio is low; otherwise it is not possible to achieve the intended results. The Committee was astonished to learn that it is extremely difficult to get the necessary personnel from the Ministry of Education. As is widely known, there exists a considerable number of seconded teachers (*αποσπασμένοι δάσκαλοι και καθηγητές*) working for the government (see, for example, Hopf and Ξωχέλλης 2003: 65). Some of them could be sent to universities where they could foster and keep alive initiatives, such as the one discussed here.

IMPLEMENTATION

Please comment on:

- Quality of teaching procedures

Students did not formulate strong objections against the Department's teaching methods. On the contrary, they gave many positive examples of individualized teaching or open education approaches. Since we were not in the position to observe teaching lessons, our judgements about these findings stand on weak grounds. It should be pointed out, however, that there were some positive remarks concerning the intentions of some lecturers to link research and practice. In addition, the Committee is confident that there are many examples of good and inventive teaching in the Department, since the faculty members do not only work professionally, but also they are extremely devoted to their work. Under such circumstances, there is a high probability that many interesting results may be produced.

- Quality and adequacy of teaching materials and resources

Although some teaching material was provided electronically to the Committee, the Committee members regretted the fact that there was no opportunity to see an adequate sample of teaching materials and other resources due to the students' sit in. It is apparent though that the faculty has a very flexible philosophy concerning the adaptation of course materials to the needs and levels of the students.

- Mobility of academic staff and students

As it could be detected from the given data, the number of students who go to other universities, either in Greece or abroad, is very limited. The reasons for this hesitation are not known. It may well be that the economic crisis prevents people from taking any type of risk. Concerning the mobility of the academic staff, the EEC cannot offer a valid judgment, since the available data is not enough. It should be pointed out, however, that many members of the Department have established collaborations with colleagues from other departments and universities both in Greece and abroad.

RESULTS

Please comment on:

- Efficacy of teaching

As has been already stated, it is not possible to assess the efficacy of teaching without having attended actual classes.

IMPROVEMENT

The Committee found clear evidence of the Department's interest in the improvement of teaching methods. Since there is a broad range of expertise among the faculty members, the preconditions are optimal for changing not only the procedures and materials, but also course structure. In so doing, there will be a further improvement of the existing teaching approaches that are already quite efficient.

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 supports and promotes research into two main areas: a) German Language and Linguistics, including pedagogy/teaching and learning; and b) the literature and culture of German-speaking people (primarily German, and Austrian), and comparative approaches to European literature and culture, including literary translation and creative writing.

- Has the Department set internal standards for assessing research?

The Department has not set internal standards for assessing research for various reasons: the lack of funding, incentives, or infrastructure for research development in the School of Philosophy. The only case in which some standards are applied is when it comes to matters of promotion (from lecturer to assistant, from assistant to associate and from associate to full professor).

IMPLEMENTATION

- How does the Department promote and support research?

The Department promotes and supports research through the establishment of a research unit (“Εργαστήριο Εκπαιδευτικής Έρευνας και Γλωσσικών Εφαρμογών”/“Labor für Sprachforschung und Didaktik”), the launch of a scholarly series (*Hellenogermanica*) in collaboration with the Department of German Language and Literature at the University of Athens, research leaves (sabbaticals), the organization of conferences and colloquia on campus, occasional and regular guest speakers, and collaborative research. The quality and adequacy of research infrastructure and support is a matter of concern for several faculty members.

It would have been very beneficial if more faculty members had secured EU or other funding for their projects. A research development office assisting faculty members to identify and apply for EU and other funds is very much needed. The number of scholarly publications of the Department compares favorably with comparable faculty publications in other universities both inside and outside Europe. However, there are some significant discrepancies in the research output among the members of the Department. The Committee recommends that the university should reward those faculty members who are research active, with additional travel funds, teaching time release, research leaves, and acknowledgement during the promotion process.

- Scientific publications

As has been previously pointed out, the Department's academic staff has a considerable number of publications. However, not many of them contribute to the authors' visibility and that of the Department, since they are rarely published in international peer-reviewed journals or in highly estimated publishing houses. For this reason, more faculty members are encouraged to publish their work in journals and publishing houses with high academic standards. In addition, more faculty members are advised to make their work available in the internet. In so doing, they will contribute to the Department's visibility and to the promotion of their work. Copyright issues should not be a problem, since influential scientific institutions both inside and outside Europe are moving to the direction of "Open Access".

- Research projects

The Department has a number of projects among them the following five: 1) „Funktional-pragmatische Diskursanalyse von Alltagsdiskursen“ (since 1998), 2) „Entwicklung von DaF-Materialien“ (since 1999), 3) „Funktional-pragmatische Diskursanalyse von Unterrichtskommunikation“ (since 2005), 4) „Korpusbasierte kontrastive Analyse der Bewegungsereignisse des Griechischen und des Deutschen: die Hypothese der Asymmetrie zwischen Quelle und Ziel“ (since 2012), and 5) „Lernerkorpus der Emotionen“. Erstellung eines „Lernerkorpus' der Emotionen“ (since 2013). The Committee would like to encourage more members of the staff who work on literature and/or culture to participate in these projects, and to initiate further projects in their discipline.

- Research collaborations

The last of the projects listed above is the only collaboration between the Department and other Departments in foreign universities. Some of the other projects are collaborations between some of the Department's members.

RESULTS

The Department's research objectives were implemented through 1) an adequate number of scholarly books; 2) a sizeable number of papers published in conference proceedings and periodicals; 3) a good number of on-going research projects; and 5) some research collaborations. The Department has been visible primarily in Greece. However, there are some publications, which are also visible abroad.

IMPROVEMENT

The Department seems to be aware of the fact that its scholarly profile should reach higher standards in order to achieve international recognition. The Department has undertaken some initiatives in this direction, such as the foundation of a society for the promotion of Greek scholars working on German language, literature and culture (“Griechische Gesellschaft für Germanische Studien”), the launch of a scholarly book series, and the organization of international conferences. Of course, these initiatives should be strengthened and multiplied.

D. All Other Services

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

APPROACH

- How does the Department view the various services provided to the members of the academic community (teaching staff, students).
The Department sees as important the quantity and quality of the services that are offered to the students. This is the reason why staff members invest many hours in this area. As a result, students benefit from a close relationship with the teaching and administrative staff, which is further strengthened through the variety of events organised for students (see below). At the departmental level, there seem to be strong links among the various stakeholders of the academic community, which affect positively both the quantity and quality of the services provided. The negative aspects of the services that are directed to students are more or less related to the facilities which will be discussed below. As far as the services that are addressed to the members of teaching and administrative staff are concerned, the points, which could be improved, are also to a large extent related to the facilities.

- Does the Department have a policy to simplify administrative procedures? Are most procedures processed electronically?
Most administrative procedures are already processed electronically (examples: online registration for courses, online information on courses through course information forms). It is quite obvious that a huge progress has been made in this area.

- Does the Department have a policy to increase student presence on Campus?
As stated above in the section of Teaching, there are some ideas, but the Department has not taken efficient actions yet. It has to be pointed out, however, that, on the one hand, student presence on Campus is developed through additional, extracurricular activities that are initiated by the Department. On the other hand, there are several factors which prevent the students from coming to Campus, such as the lack of appropriate lecture rooms.

IMPLEMENTATION

- Organization and infrastructure of the Department's administration (e.g. secretariat of the Department).
The Department has two secretaries. One of them is located in the premises of the Department. She mostly deals with academic issues that are necessary for the Department's daily running. The second secretary is located in a different building.

She is occupied with faculty-related issues, such as promotion and ranking. Both secretaries are highly qualified (one of them is a PhD holder, while the other is a Master degree holder), a fact that has very positive effects on the Department's work. This is a further indication that the strengths of the Department lay on the quality of its human resources.

The secretary who is busy with student matters is available for both students and faculty staff every day. Her work is slightly assisted by two faculty members (one from the specialization in linguistics/didactics and one from that in literature/cultural studies), who act as counselors of the students. Both secretaries are extremely busy because apart from their departmental tasks they have to deal with issues that in other European universities are solved centrally. For example, it is not clear why the secretary (together with the Head of the Department) should be also in charge of collecting offers for equipment (PCs, printers etc.), or for preparing the classroom schedule for the Department's courses.

Three positions of regular secretarial staff do not exist any longer (one in the office for graduate students [γραφείο μεταπτυχιακών σπουδών] and three in the office that mostly deals with issues related to staff). For the time being, these positions are "covered" by people who are hired through subcontracting. This has the following disadvantages: the temporary staff is not trained, and it changes every few weeks, if not every week. As a result, the permanent secretaries have to train new staff all the time, a fact that diminishes their efficiency, since a lot of their time and energy, which should be used for departmental matters, is taken away. Another problem is the fact that there are some gaps in the contracts for contemporary staff. The contracts run out almost every month, and there is a delay concerning the hiring of new staff.

- 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 is a problem with lecture rooms, especially for the courses of Grundstudium. Due to the large number of students in lectures, it happens often that students cannot have a seat. As a result, students cannot attend the lecture. Here it is important to understand how the system at this university works. A specific number of rooms is allocated to every department and obviously the allocation system suffers from weaknesses. In addition, according to the statements made during the interviews with several stakeholders, the central heating hasn't been working in the lecture rooms and

the offices.

The department has its own library (18.500 books) with two librarians who have a very good profile. They are both qualified librarians and fluent speakers of German language. One of them has graduated from the Department and has a Master degree in Information Science, while the other is a native German speaker. The library's opening hours seem to be rather limited (in WS Mo-Th 9.00 am–5.00 pm, and Fr 9.00 am–2.00 pm; in SS Mo-Fr 9.00 am–2.00 pm). In SS in particular, opening hours are too short as compared to international practice. The budget of the library is very inadequate (€3.929 in 2013 vs. €13.535 in 2008). The librarians together with faculty are looking for solutions in this area, such as the collection of more information from databases with free access and the electronic unification of libraries.

Nowadays, universities pay a lot of attention to the use of technology. The equipment of the lecture rooms with a PC and a digital projector is rather standard. Nevertheless, this is not the case with the lecture rooms of the Department. According to the information that the Committee received, although the lecture rooms are equipped with a digital projector, no PCs are available. As already stated, the Department doesn't have a Sprachlabor. There is however a free internet access on campus, which, according to student information, does not always work.

The Department is very active in organizing cultural activities, which are addressed to other stakeholders of the academic community, especially to the students, but also to their families and friends. Students usually are coorganisers of and participants in these events. The two DAAD lecturers are also active in this area with the support of the German language assistant.

RESULTS

- Are administrative and other services adequate and functional?

On the one hand, the quality of services has negative aspects related to deficiencies in the area of facilities (classrooms etc.), but on the other hand, the high level of human resources (lecturers and staff) contribute tremendously to the increase of the quality of the offered services.

IMPROVEMENTS

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

There is an effort to unify some of the university's libraries, and the use of electronic portals for staff and students contributes to the minimization of administrative load. However, many of the problems originate in the structure of the university and the Ministry of Education.

Collaboration with social, cultural and production organizations

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

The department is extremely active in this area. It has set up student clubs, such as theatre, and film where students are actively involved. The work of these groups is presented on a regular basis to the public. The Deutscher Stammtisch is also important in this context. The Department has established strong links to schools, professional associations throughout the country (German language teacher associations, Goethe-Institut etc.), and abroad. All these actions, in addition to their primary goals, have also the positive side effect that the people who are involved are exposed to German language in a natural way.

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:

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

The members of the External Evaluation Committee firmly believe that the Department has managed through the process of the Internal Evaluation to set the right goals. Some of them will help the Department to overcome current problems while others will enable its development and flourishing. In particular the Committee considers important the following departmental goals.

1. The increase of international publications (namely peer-reviewed publications) will provide the Department with a more international profile. This is a short- or medium-term goal that it is not difficult to achieve. At the department level, what is needed is the willingness of the faculty members and their support by the Departmental presidium and administration. At the university level, each faculty member should be provided with an appropriate

and pleasant office, with more opportunities to take a leave, and with financial support. In addition, the university is asked to acknowledge in various ways the faculty members' good work. At the state level, the Department should be provided with more personnel and with financial support that will allow the purchase of the needed scholarly books and databases.

2. Introduction of practical training in other domains, such as tourism, media, theatre, publishing, and translation. This medium-term goal is not difficult to realise, since the faculty members are very much in favour. However, the state should provide more personnel and financial support while the Department should build up new co-operations with local and/or international organizations and associations.

3. A Joint Degree with a partner university in the fields of German language and philology. This medium- or long-term goal is extremely desirable. Such a degree would increase the numbers of international students who come to the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki while local students will have the opportunity to improve their German by spending some time in a German-speaking university. This will also allow for a higher mobility among both faculty members and students. In addition, the Department's work will become more visible abroad. Of course, the Department will have to invest a lot of time and energy in the realisation of this second goal, but the Committee believes that there are high chances to be achieved. This is a very dynamic Department, which has cooperations abroad that could be used also in the establishment of a Joint Degree.

4. Introduction to a PhD program (Graduiertenkolleg)
 This long-term goal is extremely ambitious and expensive, and as a result, it is very difficult to achieve unless the Department develops a serious fundraising policy.

As is obvious, the Department has very clear and in most cases feasible goals. The Committee feels that the faculty members have reflected a lot on their work and practices, and that in so doing they managed to identify the most important areas in which further action should be taken. Of course, this is an extremely positive and promising factor, since a

mutual understanding and agreement between the Department and the Committee is the *sine qua non* of the implementation of the quality assurance recommendation. The Committee would like to endorse most of the Department's suggested plans and actions for improvement. However, it has some further comments and recommendations that will be presented in the next and last part of the Report.

F. Final Conclusions and recommendations of the EEC

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

In an attempt to make recommendations that will make an already strong Department stronger, the members of the External Evaluation Committee are aware of the fact that, as stated in the Introduction, their own understanding of the Department is necessarily limited. By mentioning certain primary issues and concerns, the Committee acknowledges that some of these issues are common to Departments of foreign languages and philologies across the country.

As has been obvious in various places of this Report, the Committee is extremely impressed by the Department's high professional competence and the engagement of its members. The departmental culture appears healthy and supportive. Faculty members meet regularly and talk frequently in their interest groups, and as Department of German Language and Philology. Both undergraduate and graduate students speak highly of the offered courses and the lecturers. They especially praised the generosity of faculty members in working with them individually.

The Department of German Language and Philology has done a very hard work in setting its priorities, and building to its strengths in a number of areas, such as linguistics, the teaching of German as a foreign language, translation, literature, critical theory and cultural studies, as well as in developing interesting initiatives, such as Creative Writing and studies in Dutch language and culture. The Committee also identified another interesting initiative undertaken between the Department and other departments of the university that is the development of interdisciplinary graduate programs.

PROPOSALS/RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT TO BE CARRIED OUT BY THE DEPARTMENT

CURRICULUM

The Department has already proven its willingness and capability to introduce improvements in the Curriculum through the tremendous upgrades which took place in the last years. However, there is still room for further improvements.

1. The Department may be described as a mega-institute, since apart from German language and philology it covers all disciplines that are related to teacher training: language training and development, subject-oriented didactics, general didactics, and general pedagogy. According to international standards, many of these subjects are offered by other Departments. On the one hand, through this didactic/pedagogical dimension of the Curriculum the students acquire a very good training as teachers, on the other hand, however, the danger of work overload is becoming acute. For this reason, the Department is advised to become more flexible, and to make some of the compulsory courses in pedagogy and didactics optional.
2. The students should have the option to acquire practical training not only in the teaching of German as a foreign language, but also in other domains, such as the teaching of literature, translation, and tourism.
3. It would be equally important to offer students a broad spectrum of possibilities from the beginning of their studies in Grundstudium. Obviously, this could be possible if some of the pedagogy/didactic courses become optional.

TEACHING

1. Educational diagnostics and assessment methods: the instruments used for the students' placement in language courses need further development and improvement. In addition, educational diagnostics should be included in the Curriculum, since it is very useful for the prospective school teachers when it comes to marking the pupils' work and assessing their knowledge.
2. Reduction of the number of incoming students or increasement of the academic personnel. The strong tendency towards the deteriorating of student/lecturer ratios, especially in the area of practica and microteachings, is going to produce a very

dysfunctional system within a few years. On the other hand, the fact that there is an increasing number of good students, who wish to study German language and philology, should be taken into consideration. In this case, the Department should look for other solutions. For instance, external funding could be found for supporting new faculty positions.

RESEARCH

1. Improvement of the publication strategy: the Committee advises all faculty members to publish their work in international journals and publishing houses with high academic standards. Additionally, more faculty members are advised to make their work accessible in the internet.
2. The academic staff is asked to find new and better ways of using any available opportunities to visit other universities and research centres. The Committee, however, is aware of the fact that the financial means offered by the Greek state are very limited.
3. Members of the academic staff, who specialize in literature and cultural studies, are advised to have a stronger presence in the Department through research projects and the organization of conferences.

ALL OTHER SERVICES

More efficient organisation of departmental committees: in relation to the small number of staff members, the Department is currently running an extremely high number of committees (18) which take an enormous part of the members' time, and as a result, reduces their efficiency in more important areas, such as research. The Department is asked to address the question whether all these committees are really necessary. Most of these committees deal with primarily administrative issues. The Department could examine whether these committees could be transferred to an institutional level as is the practice in other universities abroad. The Department might also consider merging some of the committees, since several parallel committees exist that, for example, deal with a single one academic issue.

PROPOSALS/RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT TO BE CARRIED OUT BY THE UNIVERSITY

RESEARCH

1. The university should establish a research development office that would assist faculty members to identify and apply for EU and other funds.
2. The international research profile of the Department should be acknowledged on a university level in a number of ways, such as financial support, teaching time release, and research leaves.
3. The faculty members should be provided with all the needed means that will enable them to be research active (access to electronic sources, purchase of new books, appropriate offices).

OTHER SERVICES

1. At many universities in Europe and around the world, the allocation of lecture rooms and the purchase of technical equipment are dealt with by the central administration, a fact that has as a result a more efficient utilization of resources. When the allocation of rooms is done every semester centrally, there is a much more efficient utilization of rooms, and when a central unit is in charge of calling for tenders, usually the price the university gets is much lower because the quantity that is demanded in this case is higher.
2. A modern Sprachlabor would enable a further development of the Department. It is understandable that financial restrictions might not allow for the time being the establishment of a Sprachlabor. However, actions towards this direction should be taken.
3. Another important issue that the Committee would like to repeat is related to the offices of the Department's staff. Every faculty member should be provided with an appropriate office, which would allow him or her to do properly his or her job (student counseling, preparation of courses, administration and research).

PROPOSALS/RECOMMENDATIONS FOR IMPROVEMENT TO BE CARRIED OUT BY THE STATE

TEACHING

1. The Committee members believe that the DAAD lecturers and the DAAD German language assistant are very important for the implementation of the Department's Curriculum. It is of paramount importance to make sure that the DAAD lecturers and the assistant will continue to offer their services to the Department.
2. As it was the case in the past, the Department should be provided with seconded teachers (αποσπασμένοι δάσκαλοι και καθηγητές) who will take away from the faculty members a big work load, and as a result, the academic staff will have some more time to pursue their own research.
3. The Committee believes that the following two external factors should be also taken into consideration, for they are strongly related to quality assurance. First, the Committee would like to recommend to the Greek government to stick to high standards, and not to accept hiring procedures where German teachers in the private sector could be hired just with επάρκεια (proficiency, law 2545/1940), particularly in the event that there are many individuals who have university education. The decision to hire as school teachers candidates with επάρκεια does not lie in accordance with European directives as those are stated in official documents, such as The European Profile for Language Teacher Education (Kelly et al. 2004 and Newby et al. 2008). Second, the committee would like to recommend to the ministry to follow European standards by using the high potential of the two German Departments in the country for the planning and organisation of German classes at primary and secondary schools.

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