



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

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

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

December 2015

UNIVERSITY OF IOANNINA

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1. EXTERNAL EVALUATION COMMITTEE

The Committee responsible for the External Evaluation of the University/Technological Education Institution named: UNIVERSITY OF IOANNINA comprised the following five (5) expert evaluators drawn from the Registry kept by the HQA in accordance with Law 3374/2005 and the Law 4009/2011:

1. **Prof. Costas Iliopoulos (Chairman)**
King's College London, U.K
2. **Prof. Dimosthenis Trimis**
Karlsruhe Institute of Technology, Germany
3. **Prof. Barbara Papadopoulou**
CHU de Quebec Research Center, Laval University, Quebec, Canada
4. **Prof. Dionyssis Kladis**
International Expert, Qatar
5. **Prof. Mary Kalantzis**
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, U.S.A

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 The External Evaluation Procedure

The site visit took place from 13 to 17 December 2015.

The visit was well organized. The range of documents and data provided, as well as the type and number of people that participated, were sufficient for the purposes of the evaluation. Observed also were a range of facilities across campus – for example, offices, classes, lecture theaters, computer and research labs, the library, dining halls and athletic pavilion.

It must be noted, that the evaluation process was disrupted, but not derailed, by some specific unexpected events. First, a small group of students who were protesting against the procedure of external evaluations, prevented the work from continuing on the grounds of the University and demanded that the external evaluation committee (EEC) withdraws. Second, the University's Board of Trustees (Council) refused to participate citing that they were not prepared to meet with the evaluation committee in substandard conditions outside of the university. The stance of this body, that shares responsibility for the governance and well-being of the university, was most disappointing. In the absence of any credible case, its actions could only be deemed as highly unprofessional, irresponsible and undermining of its own institution. The refusal of the members of the Board to participate deprived EEC from discussing strategy and policy issues with any of the two major collective governance bodies of the University (Senate and Board), given that a meeting with the Senate had not been included in the visit schedule. Thirdly, members of the union of the administrative staff declined to meet with the EEC outside of the grounds of the University. Taken together, the actions of these three groups, are indicative of the serious challenges that the University faces as it strives for inclusive decision-making and the improvement of its performance.

The evaluation process continued off campus. The EEC met the Rector and the Vice Rectors of the University, the Deans of the Schools and the Chairs of the Departments, the Quality Assurance Unit of the University, members of the Internal Evaluation Committees of the Departments, representatives of academic staff, representatives of undergraduate and postgraduate (Master) students and doctoral candidates, the heads of administration offices, some graduates from the UoI and a limited number of external partners. All those who participated did so with goodwill, openness and a desire to benefit from the external evaluation process.

	TCE
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

The unexpected tensions resulted in a disruption of the process. As a result, the time available for the evaluation was substantially reduced and the working conditions were less than optimal.

2.2 The Self-Evaluation Procedure

The material provided to the EEC was extensive and mostly useful. Given the time period involved however, the documents turned out to be too numerous and too lengthy. An executive summary and a taxonomic ordering of the documents would have been helpful. There was also some unevenness in the depth and quality of the reports for different units. More coordination, editing and succinct summaries of each section would have enhanced the process. The coverage of issues and the completeness of the documents were nonetheless appreciated.

Although there was initial resistance by Greek universities in general to comply with the evaluation processes, it was reported during this site visit that participation in this exercise brought to the University a more reflective stance and some greater understanding of associated benefits in the future. The very task of collecting information has been regarded as a positive achievement for all units of the university. The university believes that the value of feedback processes is developing positively.

There is consequently now a systematic quality evaluation process in place (templates, responsibilities, information flow, coordinating unit (ΜΟΔΙΠ), electronic templates and processing of data). Analysis shows that under the difficult conditions of the moment, the established process and the level of commitment are both adequate and bode well for the future.

There was certainly much evidence of an increased awareness by all stakeholders of the importance of quality assurance. Difficulties remained however in collecting appropriate data since it was the first time. It was obvious, and stated, that there was some lack of capacity to analyse the data productively. Particularly, there were difficulties in selecting an effective methodology for addressing qualitative issues, including research activities and teaching performance.

We understand the self-evaluation procedure was inclusive and interactive, based on our discussions with the different groups of engaged participants.

	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	X
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

3. PROFILE OF THE INSTITUTION UNDER EVALUATION

3.1 Institutional Governance, Leadership & Strategy

3.1.1 Vision, mission and goals of the Institution

The University of Ioannina is a public general comprehensive university, meeting the higher education needs of Northwest Greece and especially of the region of Epirus.

Specifically, the following disciplines are covered: social sciences/humanities, natural sciences, technology sciences, information and communications technology, health sciences with a focus in medicine, economics, and fine and applied arts. Its stated mission is to provide excellent education and conduct research of international standards in these disciplines, as well as to expand educational/research offerings to include further disciplines such as political sciences, engineering and music; in order to strengthen the structure of its schools. Furthermore, the University aims to integrate with the local society, promote the economic development of the region and internationalise.

Due to the economic recession and reduced resources, the current highest priority is to sustain the quality and breadth of its educational offerings to its stakeholders. The University's top priority is to maintain the quality and quantity of services to the students. Even under difficult conditions, the establishment of an engineering (polytechnic) school is another key priority, in order to enable employment pathways for graduates from Materials Science and Engineering as well as Computer Science and Engineering.

The University's ambitious goals, in the context of drastically reduced budgets and many retirements, are achieved by:

- The increased workload of the remaining academic staff, as well as greater involvement of graduate students in tutoring and lab support;
- The restructuring/consolidating of internal organizations to improve efficiency in the provision of administrative services and infrastructure;
- Increased efforts for third party funding, especially from the European Union (EFRD and framework programs)
- The establishment of the School and Department of Architectural Engineering integrated into the proposed School of Engineering together with the Department of Material Science and Engineering as well as the Department of Computer Science and Engineering, currently belonging to different schools. By this measure, the graduates of Material and Computer Sciences and Engineering would be entitled to the professional accreditation of engineers;
- Greater participation in external research-grant competitions, including graduate student as well as increasing researcher exchanges with

European and international institutions.

The University has established a quality assurance unit to evaluate internally, on a bi-annual reporting cycle, the performance of its educational goals as well as the quality of its administrative services and the adequacy of its infrastructure. Concerning its strategic goals, the University has no formal monitoring mechanism, but it has initiated a system of ongoing communication and cooperation across all its academic and administrative units to provide an overview of achievements against set objectives.

Overall, there is a general willingness to improve the efficiency of internal structures and processes, to promote innovation and relevance for the current needs of a fast changing world. The responsiveness to the recommendations of previous external evaluations in several departments is an indication of the ability to improve. Furthermore, the leadership of the institution has demonstrated a preparedness to create structures and incentives to underpin productive change.

Nevertheless, this drive is inhibited by the following factors:

- Anachronistic legal frameworks and the frequent change of rules and political agendas;
- Inflexible work practices in some academic units, and especially in administrative services;
- Diminishing resources and declining academic staff (realized through retirement) and no new recruitment affecting the quality and coverage of a number of study and research programs.

Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

3.1.2 Organizational Development Strategy

It was reported that leadership and decision-making structures, roles, responsibilities and regulations were set out in the Rules of Procedure of the Institution or Internal Regulation Document. The actual document however does not appear to comply with the current legal framework, while the already approved document by the Senate has not been validated by the University Board (Council) and the Ministry. These challenges are further compounded by the recent announcement by the Government that the legal framework is going to change again, producing ongoing ambiguities. This situation impacts on the effectiveness of operations.

The basic units of the University are the departments, which are organized into schools that coordinate all teaching and research activities. The smooth operation and collaboration evident within the schools in terms of research, teaching activities and ongoing support of students in their studies, is commendable. Furthermore, it was reported that there had been established over time good vertical two-way communication between the rectorate, the schools, and the departments. It seems, however, that effective and timely cooperation with the Council was lacking and that this often resulted in delays in decision-making. For example, operational regulations already approved by the Senate, have not yet been validated by the Council and the Ministry. This poses a serious handicap for the institution given that previous regulations are not compatible with the current legal framework.

The institutions key goals are as follows:

- Establishment of a School of Engineering (polytechnic)
- Establishment of a Department of Political and Social Science within the School of Economic and Social Sciences
- Establishment of a Department of Music within the School of Arts
- Establishment of a Department of Nursing within the School of Health Sciences
- Establishment of a Department of Special Education within the School of Education
- Development of a School of Agriculture

Timeframes

- Concerning the School of Engineering: the decision-making bodies of the University, the Senate and the Council have submitted recommendations to the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs with reference to the operation of the Engineering School. These recommendations proceed in the general framework of a strategic plan according to which the School of Architectural Engineering will develop into the School of Engineering comprising (apart from the newly founded Department of

Architectural Engineering) the Departments of Materials Science and Engineering and Computer Science and Engineering, today belonging to the School of Sciences.

- Concerning the establishment of the Department of Special Education and the Department of Nursing, the Senate has already approved this development plan. No further steps have been undertaken up to now, partially because of the unclear legal framework.
- Concerning the establishment of a Department of Political and Social Sciences and a Department of Music as well as a School of Agriculture, no concrete administrative steps have been undertaken and the timeframe is unclear.

Although initial steps have been taken towards the realization of the above goals, external factors such as the lack of formal approval by the Government regarding the establishment of the new school and the unclear announced new legal framework (unclear responsibilities of the Senate and the Council) affect the further steps for the establishment of the new departments. Perhaps, better justification for the establishment of these new departments as part of a coherent strategic plan, approved by all organization bodies, would have strengthened this development plan.

	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

The development plan of the University of Ioannina is not formulated in a coherent document, but fragmented in several documents. However, the plan seems very logical. Major shortcomings are the missing detailed justification supporting these plans and a feasibility as well as a sustainability study.

3.1.3 Academic Development Strategy

The University of Ioannina numbers 7 Schools and 16 Departments. The University offers all cycles of studies, undergraduate, post-graduate and doctoral studies.

Each department has recently established an internal evaluation group and procedure, which monitors goals and performance. The process was setup centrally and assisted through uniform questionnaire templates and electronic processing of the collected data. As a consequence, the redesign and modernization of several undergraduate and postgraduate study programs has already been undertaken.

Through effective communication between the University's governance bodies, and the schools and departments, new targets concerning the establishment of new study programs, more relevant to broader economic development, were set. These aim to strengthen the region economically, as well as provide pathways for students to the labour market.

Concerning research, the University established the Network of Research Supporting Laboratories. These make it possible for important high-end infrastructure initiatives, needing large investments to access multiple users from different departments. The operation of each of those laboratories is under the responsibility of a designated department.

The University responds effectively, within its capabilities, especially to the needs of the units with critical mass and demonstrating excellence at an international level.

The prioritizing and maintenance of central facilities, like the modern library, the language center, the career center, the entrepreneurship and innovation support center and the international department, as well as the centrally organized support of the students for participation in the ERASMUS+ program, underpin the operation, development and attraction of all departments.

Goals and timetables

- Improvement and resolving of all difficulties associated with the newly established internal quality assurance process, so that in future it can be operated smoothly with less internal efforts. This should be functional at the next academic term.
- Upgrade of the language center in order to offer more languages. The pace depends on the availability of funding for additional teaching capacity.
- Establishment of a postgraduate study commission reporting to the Senate responsible for both postgraduate and doctoral studies. The commission should be established by the next academic year.
- Maintenance and upgrade of the laboratory equipment. The pace

depends on the availability of funding. A priority, based on the available funding, is set for equipment used for teaching.

- Further expansion of the Network of Research Supporting Laboratories, depending on the availability of funding, mostly originating from European programs for regional development, but also through R&D funding within regular running FP7 framework activities; and activities within the current H2020 framework program.
- Establishment of a scholarship program for students, especially for postgraduate students, again depending on the availability of funds.

Measures taken to reach goals

- Seeking increased funds from the Ministry after years of extreme budget cuts, in order to provide the necessary maintenance and upgrade of the laboratory equipment used in teaching, as well as the research equipment.
- Seeking for further European and regional funds for supporting all actions.
- Continuous feedback of the internal quality control evaluation for the further development of the study programs.
- Expanding the e-learning web space, which already covers a significant part of the offered lectures.
- The utilization/mobilization of donations, legacies and real estate properties of the University, especially towards student support through scholarships, is identified as a priority measure to be evaluated for a short-term realization.

	Tick
Worthy of merit	✓
Positive evaluation	X
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

3.1.4 Research Strategy

The University regards itself as a research intensive institution that compares well with others in the nation and internationally. It strives to participate actively in international competitive research agendas and to conduct research that makes an impact on society. Its peaks of excellence reside in the social sciences, humanities, natural sciences, and health sciences.

The funding of research activities is coordinated by the Research Committee of the University of Ioannina. Research is administered by the Secretariat of the Special Account for Research Funds. The funded activities include basic and applied research in Engineering Sciences, Natural Sciences, Health Sciences, Humanities, Economic Sciences, Educational Sciences and Arts.

Particular emphasis is placed on interdisciplinary applied research programs of interest to the Greek industry, economy and society. The research is funded primarily by the European Commission Support Framework through the various Operational Programmes, i.e. the Regional Development Fund, the Research Framework Programmes (FP6, FP7, H2020, ERC, etc.), as well as from the private sector.

Many research projects are conducted by transnational partnerships between groups from the University of Ioannina and the respective groups of the institutions, enterprises and organizations of other countries, both within and outside the European Union.

The research strategy of the University of Ioannina focuses on:

- Encouraging research collaborations within each department;
- Expanding multidisciplinary research within the schools and across the schools;
- Encouraging publication of research results in reputable international journal and conferences;
- Providing financial management of the projects via the Research Committee and SARF;
- Providing support for preparation of grant applications, especially for applications in the European Commission framework programs;
- Maintaining and upgrading of the research infrastructure;
- Applying for additional funds to the EU and the Ministry of education for research infrastructure;
- Strengthening collaborations with other national and International institutions

In order to facilitate depth and breadth of expertise, the university has created a Network of Laboratory Research Units and Centers:

- Nuclear Magnetic Resonance Center (NMR)
- Scanning Electron Microscopy Unit (SEM/EDS)
- Confocal Laser Microscopy Unit Power X-Ray Diffraction Unit
- Single Crystal X-Ray Diffraction Unit

- X-Ray Fluorescence Unit
- Mass Spectrometry Unit
- Archaeometry Center
- Central Laser Facility
- Magnetic Measurements' Unit
- Thermal Measurements' Unit
- Cancer Biobank Center
- Center for Scientific Simulations
- Environmental, Organic and Biochemical Analysis Unit - ORBITRAP LC-MS
- Clinical trial and Applied Research IN Oncology Group (CARING)
- Genetic Analysis Unit
- Center for Atherothrombosis
- Stem Cell Unit
- Center for Biosystems and Genomic Network Medicine (CBS, GenNetMed)

The research output measured by publications and citations is, in general, very satisfactory. However, there are some underperforming units, departments, groups. In this respect, incentives should be given for publication-driven research.

Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

3.1.5 Financial Strategy

One of the key goals of the University is to defend public sector investment in education and to eliminate poor practices in the use of its various (diminishing) funding sources. It has made a number of serious formal commitments to this end. It has also made a commitment to justice, good administration and transparency and to improving the long-term potential of the University.

The University has embarked on a process of designing four-year plans to advance its mission. Given the austerity conditions of the Nation and the constant political flux, long-term planning is certainly challenging. Nonetheless, the University is striving to formalize and implement its stated various goals. The multiple lines of approval and decision making appear complex and in fluctuation. The role of the Senate, the Council, and the executive administrators of the University appear to be in constant negotiations and suffer from periodic political and ideological interventions that hamper consistency and effectiveness in meeting stated goals.

Its four-year financial plan is divided into four areas:

- Support of undergraduate studies
- Support of postgraduate studies
- Support of academic research
- Support of administration

The University implements a quality system for financial management (i.e., ISO) and uses computerized project management software and budget monitoring.

The Property Development and Management Company is managing the estate of the University. Its intention is to engage in activities that have the potential to enhance the University's financial and academic goals, including:

- Seeking donations and other financial contributions from public or private, domestic or foreign sources.
- Raising funds by providing services to third parties (i.e. studies, reports etc.).
- Raising funds by leasing of canteens, restaurants, guest-houses and other University buildings.
- Providing funding for construction works.
- Providing funds for equipment for departments and laboratories.
- Providing funds for the professional development of academic and administrative staff.
- Providing funds for buildings and Student-Hall renovations.
- Managing the finances of the University restaurant.

However, currently the activities focus mostly on student welfare, while other activities are underexplored and underdeveloped.

Currently, there are no clear regulations concerning the treatment of Intellectual

Property (IP) and the possibilities for creating additional funding sources associated with entrepreneurship and the commercialization of research results. It was noticed, that a remarkable number of protectable research results exist, which has the potential for future commercialization. The University leadership evaluates the possibilities for raising funds in collaboration with the regional authorities for enabling such protection and the creation of start-up companies in the already existing technological park. Alternatively, the valorisation through licensing is also being considered.

The accreditation of existing laboratories for providing services in the region is also being considered as a possible additional source of funding. However, this should be regarded very carefully, since competition with local companies providing comparable services has to comply with the legal framework and especially with the European Directives protecting against unfair competition.

	Tick
Worthy of merit	<input type="checkbox"/>
Positive evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Partially positive evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/>
Negative evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/>

3.1.6 Building and Grounds Infrastructure Strategy

Building and infrastructure is managed by a Technical team. Its responsibility is to maintain buildings and grounds in good condition and improve/modify them where it is needed by:

- Ensuring that the fire and safety regulations for buildings and the laboratories are adhered to
- Planning and maintaining the landscape of the campus
- Redesigning and maintaining the road system of the campus
- Overseeing the overall security of the buildings and the laboratories
- Overseeing routine services, such as central power and heating plants, dining facilities

There is a four-year plan to house new departments and relocate old ones that have inadequate housing. Limited funds and serial budget cuts however have impacted negatively on the capacity of the University to make future investments in facilities, particularly with regard to the construction of new buildings. Fortunately, the institution had planned the construction of new buildings which are now completed or near completion such as the new building for the Material Sciences, the new building for Biological Applications & Technology, as well as a new Hall of Residence. All new buildings provide excellent infrastructure and facilities including equipment. All facilities that we visited, offices, classrooms, lecture halls, laboratories, dining pavilions, the library and sports facilities, all appeared clean and well maintained. Efforts to improve energy consumption were also evident with the study to introduce photovoltaic power systems.

There are additional housing needs to accommodate the newly established School and Department of Architectural Engineering, the Department of Economics as well as the School of Arts. In the contemporary lack of public funds, it is difficult to establish a timetable for their realization. In the case of the Department of Architectural Engineering the possibilities for housing in cooperation with the city of Ioannina is being considered. Generally, the University was able to find adequate temporary solutions to accommodate the current shortage of housing space (e.g. portable space for the biotechnology group). Additionally, the main University building was conceived to offer temporary space for the establishment of new groups.

Generally, there is great pride in the physical university, the breadth of this property and in the achievements to date in improving and expanding facilities. Some representative buildings like the monastery, the S. Niarhos Center, the central library and the K. Papoulias Conference Center are clearly assets of international visibility. The University clearly follows the concept of "1 campus / HEI", while some minor representation in the city centre would be beneficial for a better visibility of the University in the city of Ioannina.

Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

3.1.7 Environmental Strategy

The University implements a System for the Management of Clinical Waste. All Departments and laboratories of the University that generate clinical waste (Departments of Chemistry, Physics, Medicine, Biological Applications and Technology, Materials Science and Engineering, Fine Arts and Sciences of Art) participate in this initiative.

Six different types of waste materials generated by a laboratory are designated as clinical waste. The laboratories are required to follow the appropriate and approved disposal route according to which waste is first accumulated within a specific area of the laboratory and then transferred, temporarily, to a designated secure collection point.

A specialist clinical waste disposal contractor, on an annual basis, monitors the waste stored in the containers, packages and labels each container in accordance with the national and EC legislative requirements, collects the waste and assures its safe transportation.

The contractor is a registered company, complying with all health and safety national and regional regulations to be able to transport hazardous waste on a public highway.

All laboratories generating clinical waste increasingly fulfil the policy objectives of the System for the Management of Clinical Waste. All new Departments of the University, which generate clinical waste, will be included in the Waste Management System.

	Tick
Worthy of merit	X
Positive evaluation	X
Partially positive evaluation	X
Negative evaluation	X

3.1.8 Social Strategy

The University is located at a distance from the city. This has both positive and negative consequences. On the whole, the institution is sincerely committed to sustaining a closer productive relationship with local and regional bodies. The University has Open Days to attract local students to the campus and to inform the community of its offerings. We heard of many instances of significant relationship. The University hosts a series of lectures and other cultural activities in the township. It also has close relationships with local schools and education leaders providing professional development and other educational services. Special labs were developed for students from elementary and secondary school to teach them science. The IT expertise of the University has assisted the local community with technology solutions. The local community, in turn, provides placements for students across a number of disciplines. We heard from local stakeholders they desired even greater relationships. For example, help with economic development, scientific analysis of emerging products and assistance with improving the water quality of the lake.

The alumni relationships appeared to be underdeveloped, as well as fundraising goals. However, we did hear that there was a commitment to explore more seriously the way which alumni can support the mission of the University.

Students and academic staff participate in a wide range of social and cultural activities, - music theatre plays, public seminars, conferences and other social gatherings. The Hall of Arts and Culture provides cultural and intellectual activities as well as broad- ranging entertainment.

	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	X
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

3.1.9 Internationalization Strategy

The international profile of the University is in a developing phase. The University has a strong commitment to growing its international relationships. Many of the academic units have well established relationships with international colleagues and are participating in joint research agendas.

The University encourages teaching staff mobility, joint master degree programmes, internationalizing curricula, introducing English as a second language of instruction, awarding the Diploma Supplement and issuing the Europass mobility.

The University has an established ERASMUS+ programme that runs efficiently. A large number of students visit a wide number of universities in Europe, simultaneously as well as, a number of students visit the University of Ioannina under the scheme. A number of academic staff also takes the opportunity to establish teaching and research links with their academic counterparts under the same scheme. Furthermore, a number of international guests give lectures for the post-graduate courses and international summer schools are organized by several departments.

The departments participate in the organization committees of international meetings and conferences, some of them being organized in Ioannina at the University Conference Centre. Additionally UoI participates in the Leonardo da Vinci program for providing practical training positions abroad. Through the ΔΑΣΤΑ unit, students are supported and oriented for international training activities.

The Center for the Study of the Hellenic Language and Culture (HeLaS), through its wide range of educational and research activities and programs, hosts a significant number of foreign students (free movers or scholarship students), promotes the Greek language and culture, and encourages intercultural and multicultural interaction.

Worthy of merit	TIC
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

3.1.10 Student Welfare Strategy

The University has made the welfare of students a high priority. Not only in terms of official support that it provides; but in terms of a general regard to their overall well-being, scholarly and personal life. It was evident that academic staff works diligently to support their students scholarly progress, including efforts to enable conference travel, publication and other needs. Students have highly subsidized as well as free access to the following:

- Student Halls (941 beds), including limited capacity for people with special needs
- 3 meals per day
- Hotel accommodation where is needed
- Sports facilities
- A psychologist for student counselling
- Accommodation and language support for foreign students

In these economically difficult times, the above listed resources are insufficient, as more accommodation and counselling is needed. The University is aware of this but lack of funding is preventing them from addressing adequately these issues. There was a call from students and academic staff for more attention to be paid to securing greater numbers of student scholarships and prizes.

Worthy of merit	X
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

While we acknowledge the efforts made by the Institution to improve student welfare, especially during this period of financial constraints, the Institution has to give a higher priority in areas supporting career development of the students such as scholarships, prizes and awards, participation to international meetings and high quality publications. We did not see any of those actions in the Institution's strategic plan or during our discussions with the University leaders.

3.2 Strategy for Study Programmes

3.2.1 Programmes of Undergraduate Studies (first cycle)

The University and all academic units claimed that their educational offerings align with international standards and with contemporary social expectations. We noticed that some departments had redesigned their programs to minimize compulsory courses and provide more flexibility for students to choose electives. It must be noted however, the academic staff and students commented on the fact that many programs of studies remained too loaded with excessive coursework. Given that the attendance is not compulsory, this seems to have a negative impact on the lower participation of students in classes. This trend is further amplified by the fact that many students have to work to secure their living costs.

Overall, we sensed high-quality programs that were very demanding and consumed much time. The study guides are well elaborated with complete list of module descriptions for all study programs. The previous external reviews of all departments and several independent rankings indicate that programs of study are equivalent, and in some instances better than other comparable programs across the nation and internationally.

It is noted that pedagogical reform is moving programs to more progressive orientations. Much, however, appears to remain heavily theoretical and content-driven. Although there is some movement towards the use of technology for teaching and learning, it remains, with some exceptions, mostly minimal and rudimentary. Financial and technical constraints limit the capacity to be as innovative as some academic staff and students would like. Retirements without replacement also produce detrimental effects in the delivery of programs and/or lead to closure of some courses or entire specialization pathways. If it is the case that the recruitment of academic staff is not likely to occur, the Institution has to make a plan about the future of key courses, programs and disciplines that cannot be covered otherwise.

The students who participated in this evaluation were extremely articulate and very satisfied with the level of commitment of academic staff. In fact, this seemed to mitigate to some degree the financial constraints that academic staff and students were facing.

The University leadership seemed to welcome and value the external evaluation of academic programs. There was evidence that the recommendation of former evaluation processes had been taken seriously and there had been some movement to reform and adjust educational offerings.

It was noticed that some basic courses are offered with almost identical content in different departments. Consideration should be given to the possibility of better coordinating course offerings in the various departments with the goal of decreasing duplication and teaching load.

Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

3.2.2 Programmes of Postgraduate Studies (second cycle)

Postgraduate study programs reflect the research targets of each department. All departments offer 1-4 postgraduate (second cycle) study programs. Most of these study programs have already been positively evaluated by the latest external evaluations on the department level. Suggestions for improvements were considered in the further development of the programs. In most programs students participate in the ongoing research work of the department. Almost all postgraduate students are expected to contribute to teaching. In the case of the disciplines enabling educational professions, it is considered a very positive element.

Postgraduate studies include seminars and invited lectures by academic and research faculty staff from Greece or abroad. The meeting with the postgraduate students from all departments indicated a high level of satisfaction with the programs, the collaboration and availability of the academic staff, as well as the scientific level of the offered programs. Postgraduate students are required to attend courses regularly, participate in all interactive activities and prepare, write and defend their postgraduate diploma thesis. Concerning course requirements, it was noted that the prerequisites for attending a course in some cases are not thoroughly worked out. For example, teaching staff may complain about students attending courses without the necessary background and students may complain about choosing courses out of their primary interest because of an exhaustive list of prerequisites. Due to the reduced number of academic staff, some particular classes and specializations cannot be offered, thus limiting planned program diversity. Unlike the standard situation with the undergraduate study programs, there is not a fully-deployed mechanism ensuring a homogeneous presentation and quality of study guides. Most programs do not provide detailed descriptions for lecture series.

Most of the remarks and recommendations made by the previous external evaluations of academic units, deal with matters that are the responsibility of the departments. Some of these have been adopted by the departments, especially the ones related to the curriculum. Others, especially dealing with distribution of resources, seem not to have been considered as seriously. Remarks and recommendations addressing matters that are within the responsibility of central administration mostly relate to the recruitment of academic staff or technical personnel. These are critical, given the significant reduction of academic and technical staff members, leading to difficulties in maintaining current programs. However, the central administration is limited in its ability to address these recommendations. A further strong recommendation regarding the establishment of a scholarship program for postgraduate studies also has had no concrete actions taken by the central administration. A plan has more recently been sketched, which aims to mobilize donations, legacies and real estate properties of the University, so as to provide student support through

scholarships.	
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

3.2.3 Programmes of Doctoral Studies (third cycle)

The University takes great pride in its doctoral (PhD) study programs and ensures they align with EU and broader international standards on inquiry. The strong points of the Doctoral Program include:

- Enthusiastic, eager students with adequate background to undertake the studies
- Supportive and encouraging academic staff

Areas of improvement include:

- The need of establishing structured doctoral PhD programs, in parallel to the existing system
- The need to increase funding to attend conferences and pay open access fees to journals
- The need to increase the number of students with scholarships
- The need to establish prizes/awards to reward excellence

The majority of PhD students do not receive financial support, which forces them to take part or full- time jobs, thus hindering progress in their studies.

Most PhD students participate in teaching and lab duties. Overall, the standard of supervision appears to be adequate in the vast majority of the departments, with some departments being exceptional.

Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

3.3 Profile of the Institution under evaluation -Conclusions and recommendations

Positive points:

- The University of Ioannina (Uoi) has maintained the quality and quantity of services to the students in the context of drastically reduced budgets.
- Given the context of austerity and ongoing budget cuts, the University is remarkably resilient and continues to innovate. This was demonstrated by moves to establish a new engineering (polytechnic) school, establishing new departments, and programs for music, nursing, special education, and agriculture.
- The University has continued to upgrade and improve infrastructure with the completion of a building for Material Sciences and Biological Applications and Technology as well as a new hall of residents.
- The spirit of the University remains robust and there is much pride in its accomplishments, including participating seriously in quality assurance processes.
- There are steady moves to improve research infrastructure, postgraduate programs and research capacity. This is associated with the parallel moves to internationalize and to seek opportunities in partnerships outside of Greece.
- There were signs that the University is appreciated by its local stakeholders and that it understands the need to extend its value to and partnership with its local community.

Negative points:

- Strategic planning is relatively new and not yet as robust as it might be.
- Declining budgets and opaque business frameworks undermine confidence and have the effect of distracting focus from the core mission of the University.
- Students seem less familiar than they should be with the realities of change in the higher education sector in Greece and Europe.
- No plans were provided on how to deal with future reductions of the University budget.
- There is no equal distribution of services (e.g., administrative, secretarial, etc.)) between the different departments

Suggestions for further development of the positive points:

- The university needs to reinforce its scholarly domains of excellence in order to increase international visibility.
- Financial strategy, which appears to focus mostly on student programs and welfare-needs to address more clearly underexplored and underdeveloped domains such as hiring plans and infrastructure needs.

- The University clearly follows the concept of “1 campus / HEI”, while some minor representation in the city center would be beneficial for better visibility of the University in the city of Ioannina.
- The University would benefit from building stronger alumni relationships and establishing fundraising goals. It needs to develop a serious commitment to exploring the way in which alumni can support the mission of the university.
- Concerning PhD studies:
 - The need of establishing structured PhD programs, in parallel to the existing system
 - The need to increase funding to attend conferences, and pay open access fees to journals
 - The need to increase the number of students with scholarships
 - The need to establish prizes/awards to reward excellence

Suggestions on needed steps for improvement:

- The research output measured by publications and citations is in general very satisfactory. However, there are some underperforming units/departments/groups. In this respect, incentives should be given for publication-driven research.
- There should be a central plan for research.
- There should be more interdepartmental collaborations both for the teaching and research activities.
- Currently, there are no clear regulations concerning the treatment of Intellectual Property (IP) and the possibilities for creating additional funding sources related to entrepreneurship and the exploitation of the research results.
- There is an urgent need to expand the availability of scholarships and prizes to students.
- More strategic study programs, especially for postgraduate studies, that respond better to the economic development and labour market of the region need to be developed.
- It was noticed that some basic courses are offered with an almost identical content in different departments. It should be evaluated, whether it is possible to better coordinate the course offerings between the departments, with the target to decrease duplication and teaching load.
- Unlike the situation with the undergraduate study programs, there is not a fully deployed mechanism assuring a homogeneous presentation and quality of the study guides for postgraduate. Most programs. Most do not provide detailed module descriptions for the offered lectures.
- Although there is some movement towards the use of technology for teaching and learning, it remains minimal and rudimentary.
- There is a need to address administrative constraints that prohibit postgraduate students from receiving appropriate and timely student welfare services, e.g. housing due to mismatching of timing between

application deadlines and admission.

- Retirements without replacement also produce detrimental effects in the delivery and/or lead to closure of some courses or entire specialization pathways. In the case that new recruitments are possible, the institution has to make a plan to prioritize key disciplines that are not covered.

4. INTERNAL SYSTEM OF QUALITY ASSURANCE

4.1 Quality Assurance (QA) Policy and Strategy

The institution's policy for QA is the ongoing improvement of the teaching and research performance; of the effectiveness of governance; and of the efficiency of the services offered by the University.

This policy is implemented through the internal QA system of the Institution which is based on the operation of the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) at the institutional level and the Internal Evaluation Committees at the level of each individual department. Additionally, a specific Internal Evaluation Task Group oversees and monitors the QA of the administrative services of the Institution. The overall internal QA system has been developed according to the guidelines of the Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency (HQA).

The QAU is responsible for the effective operation of the overall QA system, the coordination of all evaluation processes, and the support of the external evaluation and accreditation procedure of the study programs. In this regard, the QAU has developed the strategic plan for QA of the institution together with guidelines for the proper implementation of the QA system. Additionally, the QAU is responsible for the preparation of all documents that are used in the context of the QA procedures.

The achievement of the objectives and the overall effectiveness of the QA system are ensured, on the one hand, through monitoring from the QAU and, on the other hand, through the periodic external evaluations.

In the context of the QA system, a transparency practice is developed across all procedures of the University, underpinned by a set of key principles, that ensure that no member of the University community (whether student, or staff) experiences any form of discrimination or a biased intervention.

The role of students in the QA procedures is quite crucial. Students are actively involved in the procedures of internal and external quality assurance. Furthermore, students provide formative feedback on the courses, the study programmes and the teaching performance of the academic staff by filling the related questionnaires.

Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

4.2 Design, approval, monitoring and evaluation of the study programmes and degrees awarded

In general, the study programs have clearly stated learning outcomes which are published in the study guide of each individual Department and are available online. The Study Guide contains also information regarding the curriculum, the organization of studies and the student workload expressed in ECTS. In the module descriptions, the following are described: the teaching methods, the relevant literature and the whole range of written, oral and practical tests/examinations; and, group projects, performances, presentations and portfolios that are used to assess the learner's progress and ascertain the achievement of the learning outcomes of each separate course are described. However, this practice is not applied uniformly in all departments. Specifically:

- Concerning the undergraduate studies, all information is available in all departments including the detailed module descriptions. However, the form of presentation is different between the departments and in some cases the module descriptions are not collected in a single document per study program.
- Concerning the postgraduate studies, the study guides are available; however, the detailed module descriptions are incomplete.

The undergraduate study programmes are designed by specific Committees within each department and approved by the General Assembly of the department with the involvement of students' representatives according to the provisions of the Law. An informal involvement of stakeholders outside of the Institution, like future employers, is not practiced yet. Obviously, there are no general rules, or guidelines, or common practice for the design of postgraduate study programmes. The study programmes are reassessed on a regular and periodical basis through procedures in which students participate. The set procedures and criteria aim at safeguarding the continuous relevance and duration of the study programmes.

All study programmes contain provisions that encourage and reinforce international mobility and, where appropriate, placement opportunities.

All information related to the study programmes is available on the webpage of the respective department. Generally, study guides are given to the students upon enrolment in hard-copy form.

Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

4.3 Teaching and learning - Assessment by students

In general, there are not multiple learning paths provided by the institution to accommodate special needs of students, apart from those related to some of the elective courses and the possibility to follow a study period in a university abroad.

Guidance and support are offered by various structures to the students regarding progress in their studies, career information and study counselling. These are offered by the professors (Study Consultants) or by established administrative structures (e.g. ΔΑΣΤΑ).

The study guide of each separate undergraduate programme contains clear and detailed information with regards to the strategy of the respective department for the assessment of students, and, more specifically, to which exams, or other methods of assessment, they will be subjected; what is expected of them; and which criteria will be applied for the evaluation of their performance. In the case of postgraduate programmes, the applied standards are not uniform and less detailed in comparison to the undergraduate programmes. However, the detailed information is always provided at the beginning of the courses.

Complaints and appeals filed by students are initially considered by Study Consultants, the Student Affairs Committee of each department and the Coordinating Committees for Postgraduate Studies, and are finally referred to the General Assemblies of the departments. The Law provides also for the appointment of a student advocate. However, this provision has not been implemented at the UoI, as the revised statute of the University has not been approved yet.

	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	X
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

4.4 Admission of students, progression and recognition of studies

The process through which postgraduate students and PhD candidates are admitted to second and third cycle studies, respectively, and the criteria and requirements which apply are described in the study regulations. Transparency is guaranteed by the public announcement of the study programmes in the web sites of the departments. The admission criteria are applied uniformly throughout the University.

The recognition of qualifications obtained in foreign HEIs falls under the responsibility of the National Academic Recognition Information Center (Hellenic NARIC). The General Assemblies of the departments have the authority for the recognition of periods of study abroad in the context of Erasmus mobility.

There are no provisions in the Greek legislation allowing for the recognition of former knowledge gained through prior learning (including non-formal and informal learning).

The Diploma Supplement will be fully implemented during the academic year 2015-16. Until full implementation, the related information (degree specifications – context, content and status of studies –, learning outcomes, ECTS credits, level of qualification) is provided to the graduates through the course catalogue, the study consultants and the Transcript of Records (both in Greek and English) awarded with the degree upon graduation. Upon request of the graduate, the department issues a provisional diploma supplement until the full automatic implementation.

The Institution has not yet taken full advantage of the Information System of QAU (MODIP) in order to collect, monitor and act on information on student progression. Up to now only the information system on the student record is utilized.

	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	X
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

4.5 Quality Assurance as regards the teaching staff

According to the Greek legislation, the procedures for the election of a member of academic staff require from the candidates, beyond the supporting documentation and qualifications, to demonstrate their teaching skills by delivering a lecture, open to the students and the public, on a topic of his/her choice corresponding to the first study cycle. An evaluation and general impression of the presentation itself is seriously taken into account for the selection, among other criteria.

The University encourages faculty members to pursue further professional/scientific development through participation in international conferences etc.; offers paid leaves of absence for educational purposes, promotes partnerships with other Higher Education Institutions and Research Centers abroad, and works towards increasing participation in mobility programs. Additionally, the University has put considerable effort into attracting international conferences and congresses. However, there are no concrete actions or measures taken by the University in order to improve the capacity of academic staff, with regards to innovative teaching and assessment methods, and in order to raise their teaching and pedagogic skills.

The teaching performance of academic staff is evaluated by the students by filling the relevant questionnaires. The questionnaires are collected and analysed by the QAU. The outcomes are communicated to the respective heads of the departments. Each academic staff member receives the necessary feedback on his/her personal questionnaire.

The scientific activity and the research performance of the academic staff are considered also in their assessment for election and/or promotion. However, it is under the responsibility of the departments' heads to ensure for the balanced performance of the staff between teaching and research. The link between teaching and research is extremely strong in the postgraduate programs, as the students participate more actively in the ongoing research programs.

Finally, violations of rules of conduct from the academic staff may be regarded as cause for disciplinary action according to the provisions of the Greek legislation and the statute and regulation of the University.

Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

4.6 Learning resources and student support

The services that support students (Library, Information Systems, ΔΑΣΤΑ, students' welfare services) are systematically evaluated in the context of the Internal QA system of the university under the responsibility of the QAU.

The available support services in regard to Libraries, Information systems and infrastructure are of good quality. However, the access to electronic journals is currently limited due to the general financial difficulties of the Hellenic network of academic libraries.

Teaching faculty members announce their office hours during which they provide face-to-face assistance, guidance and consultation to their students. Additionally, a key achievement of most departments of the University has been the successful implementation of a tutorial system, for students who require additional assistance and academic guidance in comprehending specific themes within their discipline. Moreover, through the interviews with students, as well as through the on-site visits, it was acknowledged that within UoI there is an open culture in place, facilitating the direct contact between students and teaching staff at any time.

Worthy of merit	✓
Positive evaluation	✓
Partially positive evaluation	✓
Negative evaluation	✓

The members of the EEC were impressed by the willingness of the teaching staff to provide additional efforts and availability for the benefit of the students, both for the laboratory courses as well as the lectures. This was obvious in random visits throughout the campus.

4.7 Information Systems for Recording and Analysing Data and Indicators

The University has developed an Information System in the context of the Quality Assurance Unit. It offers a reliable means of collecting and processing feedback on the administrative services and teaching activities, ultimately aiming at implementing cross-university enhancement initiatives in learning, teaching and administration. However, the Information System of QAU is not integrated into the general information system of the institution.

The student experience and satisfaction is measured through formal feedback (questionnaires they complete and submit on a semester-basis) and processed through the Information System of the Quality Assurance Unit. On the contrary, there are no currently processes for tracking the path of graduates in employment or further studies.

Progress rate and student success are monitored through activity reports completed by the faculty members at the end of each semester, but also through the database of the Computer Center. The data collected is processed by the Quality Assurance Unit and the outcomes are referred once again to the academic departments and their general assemblies.

The University seeks comparisons with other higher education institutions within and beyond the European Higher Education Area, with the aim of strengthening self-awareness and finding possible ways to continuously and increasingly enhance its operation at institutional and individual levels, mainly in terms of research.

	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	X
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

4.8 Dissemination of information to stakeholders

Detailed information on the degree programs offered, the expected learning outcomes, the qualifications, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures are available on the websites of each department and the online course catalogues (a number of course catalogues are also available in English). The faculty curriculum vitae are also included in the published information, both in Greek and in English. The English version of the websites is not complete for all departments, however.

Worthy of merit	✓
Positive evaluation	✓
Partially positive evaluation	✓
Negative evaluation	✓

4.9 Continuous monitoring and periodic review of the study programmes

The content of the degree programs is assessed and revised on the basis of the feedback received by internal and external evaluations and the recommendations referred to the General Assemblies by the student body and the appropriate Boards of Studies. International trends identified through the international partnerships of the teaching and research faculty: interaction with the national and international industry, scientific bodies and research groups; and, participation of students in internships, also play a key role in continuous monitoring and periodic review of the degree programs. However, monitoring of graduates' path does not exist in order to be considered in the curriculum development.

Proposals for any review processes are developed in line with recommendations put forward to the General Assemblies of the departments, pertaining to the attendance rate of lectures, participation in the laboratories' project works, student workload; and finally interim and final examinations.

Engagement of students in the review process of degree programs is ensured through their participation in the studies committees of the departments. Furthermore, more than 70% of the students attending lectures and lab courses fill the questionnaires of the QAU. External stakeholders are indirectly involved in the curriculum development procedures, through their interaction with the academic staff.

	Tick
Worthy of merit	✓
Positive evaluation	✓
Partially positive evaluation	✓
Negative evaluation	✓

4.10 Periodic external evaluation

The University encourages the departments to carefully address the recommendations made by the external evaluation committee. Its approach to the External Evaluation includes a clear focus on the departments to which most recommendations were addressed, and ensuring that all financial and administrative actions are directed towards upgrading the quality of their teaching and research. The impact of this effort can be positively assessed by the fact that all departments are already evaluated externally and the recommendations have been largely addressed.

The departments taking into account the recommendations of their previous respective External Evaluation already reviewed their study programs accordingly. However, more time is needed for the emerging positive contribution of changes implemented following the comments of the external evaluation. In due course, all the departments will be able to demonstrate progress through the next student reports. Increased attendance and understanding of the delivered lectures, employability success rates, and increased attraction of postgraduate students is expected.

Worthy of merit	✓
Positive evaluation	✓
Partially positive evaluation	✓
Negative evaluation	✓

4.00 Internal System of Quality Assurance – Conclusions and recommendations

Positive points:

- The University had established a quality assurance unit that seemed to be respected by faculty and staff.
- Faculty and staff demonstrated a high regard for their students' performance and the quality of their educational offerings.
- At Uoi, there is an open culture in place, facilitating the direct contact between students and teaching staff at any time.
- Syllabi, study program and assessment practices were regularly reviewed and publicly available.
- Measures were in place to ensure student mastery, of coursework and follow up support as needed.
- The library and technology services appear to be satisfactory for student and faculty needs.

Negative points:

- Although the University encourages departments to address the recommendation of review processes, more effort and resources need to be put into their implementation to ensure continuous improvement and appropriate change.
- The professional development of faculty and staff to take up new technology and connect with a changing higher education landscape needs to be taken more seriously.

Suggestions for further development of the positive points:

- Consideration needs to be given to the informal involvement of stakeholders outside of the institution like future employers in the design of the study programmes.
- The University needs to take full advantage of the Information System of QAU (MODIP) in order to collect, monitor and act on information on student progression.
- Consideration should be given to the restructuring of some study programs, mostly for basic courses, following thorough consultation of the concerned departments to deal with recent cuts in the budget.
- Given the reduction of staff and faculty, improved delivery of course content to larger classes could be achieved by the appropriate use of new technology to offer the same course simultaneously (for example via videoconferencing) in several departments.
- Increase the availability of scholarships, prizes, awards, especially for doctoral students.
- The policy of student advisor should be implemented more systematically across all departments.

Suggestions on needed steps for improvement:

- Concrete actions or measures need to be taken by the University in order to improve the capacity of academics, with regards to innovative teaching and assessment methods, and in order to raise their teaching and pedagogic skills.
- There is a need to introduce appropriate strategies for tracking the path of graduates in employment or further study.
- The formal introduction of the participation of external stakeholders in curriculum development could enhance the alignment of programs to social and economic needs, as well as potentially providing stronger employment pathways for students.

OPERATION OF THE GENERAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE INSTITUTION

5.7 Central Administration services of the Institution

Special Account for Research Funds (SARF)

The funding of research and development activities, as well as the non-governmental investments in infrastructure, are coordinated by the Research Committee of the University of Ioannina, and administered by the Secretariat of the Special Account for Research Funds.

Funding sources are primarily from the Greek government research programmes, the European Commission Support Framework through the various Operational Programmes, i.e. the Regional Development Fund, the Research Framework Programmes (FP6, FP7, H2020, ERC, etc.) and the private sector. In the case that UoI has the coordination of a European Research Project, the financial responsibility and funding distribution for the entire consortium is organized through the SARF.

The financial management of SARF is independent of the public accounting system, ensuring flexibility and efficiency in utilizing the received funding. The financial management has to comply with different rules imposed by the different funding sources. The SARF has ISO quality accreditation.

Financial management by SARF is effective. The SARF is collecting the overheads, when available, from all external funding sources. At the time being the diminishing reserves of SARF are mostly used to cover expenses for maintenance of the research equipment.

Financial services

The financial services are managing the regular budget under the strict regulatory framework of Greek legislation and under the rules of the Greek public accounting system.

The operation is extremely inefficient, due to lack of flexibility of the Greek public accounting system.

Supplies department

The department is responsible for any type of purchasing and commissioning within the regular budget (equipment, consumables, materials, supplies, services etc.). It organizes calls for tender and ensures compliance with the legal framework. It further coordinates all actions related to legal issues (contracts, guarantees, supporting documentation etc.) related with public purchases.

The operation is bureaucratic due to the legal framework. However, there is a plan to create a service responsible for the central coordination of supplies, which might reduce overall costs, as well as number of administrative efforts.

Technical services

The Technical Services Division coordinates, controls and plans several activities and reports to the Technical Council and to the governing bodies of the University.

The construction of new buildings has been reduced, while rearrangements in order to resolve the space requirements of new or existing departments are managed in an efficient way under the tight economic conditions.

IT services

The Computer Centre offers the following services: Mail service, Graphics, System User Services, Services for Students, Management System, Network applications, Operation and monitoring of the INTERNET and operation, Software development, Library Services, data processing and, Web Server.

The University has introduced appropriate levels of new technology to underpin its mission and aspirations, but the cost of its upkeep is very challenging given the on-going, deep, budget cuts. It was reported that the hardware was now old and beginning to fail. As a means of maximizing efficiency, and capacity the University has decided to consolidate the three existing offices associated with IT infrastructure and services. Change however is hampered by the slow pace of decision-making by the Council. Directory services have been outsourced and this too has impacted on the University's capacity to be nimble and determine its own needs. For example, it is not a member of EDUROAM due to missing services. There was much frustration among those maintaining IT services given increasing demands in the context of decreasing resources.

Student support services

Support services for students are very satisfactory. Given the large number of students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, the University is seeking supplementary funding. Students are provided with highly subsidized board, free food, counselling and access to healthcare. Postgraduate studies are free of tuition fees. A range of e-courses is also being developed to supplement students' study.

Employment and Career Centre (ECC)

There are plans to expand the employment and career services to ensure that students are well prepared for the workforce. There also exist liaison services that provide links between the academy and industry to explore possible collaborations.

Public/ International relations department

The international relations office oversees and facilitates the growing number of international visitors and the public relations of the institution. It produces presentation material for advertising the University to international students and visitors. It also manages the ERASMUS+ applications and forwards the necessary documentation to the Greek Scholarships Foundation (IKY). Services offered by this department are highly appreciated as indicated by a recent internal evaluation.

Foreign language services

English language courses are offered for all students as part of the curriculum. Greek is offered as a foreign language and is compulsory for international students.

The Center for the study of Hellenic language and culture plays a key role in attracting students from all over the world. It provides high-quality offerings in language learning and culture and has gained a high reputation for the rigor of its programs.

There is demand for additional languages, which however, cannot be covered due to lack of personnel, or funding for teaching staff on a contract basis.

Social and cultural activities

High-quality sports facilities provide opportunities for indoor swimming, basketball, volleyball, gymnastics, athletics and outdoor tennis. The University provides all training material and takes care of the maintenance. Furthermore, a sufficient number of instructors in different sports disciplines are available. Students also participate in, mostly self-organized extracurricular activities and clubs, mostly self-organized, which are supported in terms of space and consumable material by the University.

Halls of residence and refectory services

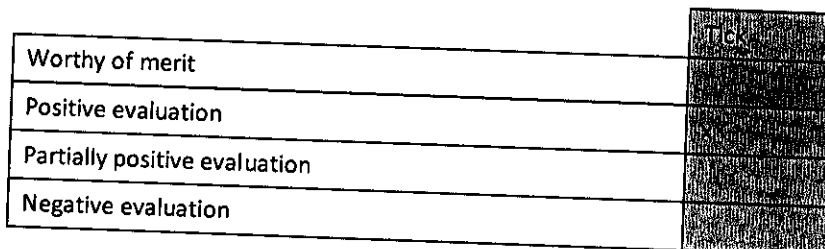
The residence halls are located centrally and well appointed. Rooms for students with special needs are available. There are also some rooms for international visitors. The University recently upgraded the halls of residence capacity through a new building. Although until recently, the capacity was considered to be sufficient and also covering also future demands, the sudden worsening of the financial situation of the student families resulted in an increased demand for subsidized housing in the Halls or Residence.

Computer services are available in the residencies and dining halls.
3 meals of good quality are provided on a daily basis.

Institution's library

The library is an impressive, very well designed and maintained facility. It is one of

the largest libraries in the nation with an extensive volume of titles across all disciplines. It includes extensive spaces for study and group work, as well as access to up to date technology services. Of concern was the limited access to electronic journals as part of the Hellenic Library Network.



5.2 Operation of the Central Administration of the Institution – Conclusions and Recommendations

Positive points:

- Overall, the University provides a positive and supportive environment for students and faculty.
- The University strives diligently to maintain its infrastructure and services even under difficult circumstances.
- Educational programs appear to align well with those of other universities across Greece and students are supported to further their education in Europe.
- Students are afforded tuition free or highly subsidized, educational programs accommodation, meals, healthcare and counselling in a convivial environment.
- The leadership of the University is thoughtful, pragmatic and aware of local, national and international forces that impact on the higher education system.
- The spirit of a team culture in administration enables the University to make ends meet when resources are lacking.

Negative points:

- It is difficult to assess for how long administrators, staff, faculty and students can sustain high quality programs and necessary innovation in the context of declining resources.
- Moral issues among students and staff need to be addressed in order to retain and recruit high-quality scholars and programs.
- Financial literacy needs to be introduced at all levels in the University so that there is a clearer understanding of the constraints involved in maintaining high quality educational programs and a strong research culture.

Suggestions for further development of the positive points:

- Central administration needs to work closely with a broader range of stakeholders, alumni, industry, legislators and local communities to broker the needs of the University. In particular, it needs to strive to impact on the regulatory framework for higher education and to work with others to secure a larger share of competitive grants at national and international levels.
- The University has to focus on servicing the needs of its local community and its province much more directly through both an economic and cultural development plan.
- The fate of Ioannina and the University of Ioannina are intertwined – greater consideration needs to be given to stronger joint branding of what they have to offer together.

Suggestions on needed steps for improvement:

- The University needs to introduce a formal professional development and mentoring program for administrators, staff and students that addresses social and technological changes that are impacting higher education.
- The University should consider creating a teaching unit that assists staff and students to recalibrate and redesign their teaching methods, curriculum and graduate attributes appropriate for the 21st century.
- Greater attention needs to be paid to both financial literacy and financial transparency for all members of the University community.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In connection with the

- *general operation of the Institution*
- *development of the Institution to this date and its present situation*
- *Institution's readiness and capability to change/improve*
- *Internal system of Quality Assurance of the Institution*

Positive points:

Under difficult financial framework and uncertainty:

- High performing personnel and students
- High quality infrastructure and research equipment
- Several strong disciplines with international visibility.
- High level student welfare and services
- Cultural and aesthetic aspects of campus life (monastery, specific museums and libraries)
- Network of research supporting laboratories providing high-end research services to all departments

Negative points:

- Poor retention of excellent academics
- Tension between government control and regulation and University autonomy
- Strategic plan not well developed lacking S.M.A.R.T. (Specific Measurable Accepted Realistic Time Bound)
- Dysfunctional relationship between the two major governing bodies: Senate and the Council
- Fatigue due to unrelenting change and persistent austerity

Suggestions for further development of the positive points:

- Further development of a mid-term strategic plan including feasibility studies, timelines, implementation plans, responsibilities and metrics (inclusive bottom up approach and stakeholders)
- Accelerate the pace of implementation of digital technologies for teaching and learning
- Improve financial accounting and reporting

Suggestions on needed steps for improvement:

- Consider ways of addressing future reductions in the budget
- Expand publication-driven supervision of doctoral PhD students
- Introduce multiple pathways for doctoral PhD studies, including

structured doctoral studies

- Increase scholarships, prizes and travel awards, especially for doctoral students
- Integrate and align the fragmented information systems within the University
- Develop clearer rules and a framework for the University's intellectual property and its commercialization

6.1 Final decision of the EEC

Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	