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Καθηγήτρια Μαίρη Κουτσελίνη
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της Ανώτερης Εκπαίδευσης (ΔΙΠΑΕ)
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Αγαπητή κυρία Κουτσελίνη,

Θέμα: Σχόλια επί της Έκθεσης Αξιολόγησης για το Μεταπτυχιακό Πρόγραμμα και το Διδακτορικό Πρόγραμμα του Τμήματος Χημείας.

Σε συνέχεια των Εκθέσεων Αξιολόγησης για το Μεταπτυχιακό Πρόγραμμα και το Διδακτορικό Πρόγραμμα του Τμήματος Χημείας, το Πανεπιστήμιο Κύπρου εκφράζει την ευαρέσκειά του στο Φορέα ΔΙΠΑΕ και ειδικότερα προς τα μέλη της Επιτροπής Εξωτερικής Αξιολόγησης (ΕΕΑ), για το άρτιο και αντικειμενικό έργο που έχουν εκπονήσει κατά τη διάρκεια της επίσκεψής τους. Η διαδικασία αυτή μπορεί να χαρακτηριστεί ως άκρως παραγωγική και εποικοδομητική, αφού τόσο τα σχόλια όσο και οι εισηγήσεις της Επιτροπής συμβάλλουν στη βελτίωση της ποιότητας και της ανταγωνιστικότητας των προγραμμάτων.

Επισυνάπτονται τα σχόλια του Τμήματος Χημείας επί των Εκθέσεων της ΕΕΑ.

Με εκτίμηση



Καθηγητής Κωνσταντίνος Χριστοφίδης
Πρύτανης

Κοιν.:
Πρόεδρο Εσωτερικής Επιτροπής Ποιότητας
Αναπληρώτρια Καθηγήτρια, Χαραλάμπους Hayes Σοφία, Πρόεδρο Τμήματος Χημείας

Recommendations		MSc	Location in Document	PhD	Location in Document	Actions
Section 1	Effectiveness of Teaching Work - Available Resources		pg 6		pg 6	
Task 1	Review structure/content of courses; consider consolidation to reduce the number of courses and broaden the scope; consider team-taught.	YES	pg 7	YES	pg 6/7	We agree that it is possible to modify some of the courses so that they are more general in agreement with an older suggestion by our post-graduate (PG) committee (e.g. Raman spectroscopy can become Advanced Molecular Spectroscopy). Some courses can become modular and team-taught by a number of faculty members.
Task 2	Engage students to participate in peer review of student seminars	YES	pg 7 (see also Sect. 1.2, pg 17)	YES	pg 7 (see also Sect. 1.2, pg 19)	We agree in the participation of students in peer review of CHE 800 - 810 seminars of their section. Our PG committee is in the process of designing a mechanism of how to practically do that.
Task 3	Switch all aspects of the course to English	YES	pg 7	YES	pg 7	The Dept voted in the Faculty meeting to implement English in the coursework gradually for the first year (e.g. transparencies and theses in English) and in all aspects of the course starting next year (lectures delivered in English etc).
Task 4	Encourage students to take on courses to enhance 'transferable skills. Incorporate such courses directly (ie non-optional) into the programme	YES	pg 7 (see also Sect. 2.2, pg 21)	YES	pg 7 (see also Sect. 2.2, pg 23)	Soft Skills Courses are offered from the Center of Teaching and Learning and the Center for Entrepreneurship of the University of Cyprus: e.g. Communication skills, Team work, ethics, IP issues etc. Our PG committee has contacted both centers and in this limited time we had to respond, the Dept had the chance to discuss such courses in more detail with the Center for Entrepreneurship. They have designed 4 different courses on Entrepreneurship for our dept, that can be included in our curriculum. At the moment we are discussing the content and ECTS weighting. We will then discuss how to incorporate them in our program (e.g. modifying accordingly the ECTS for the

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Task 5	Consider investment in staff positions in anticipation of upcoming retirements	YES	pg 7 (see also Sect. 1.3, pg 19)	YES	pg 7 (see also Sect. 1.3, pg 21)	We agree that such planning will help with continuation of the programs. The Dept Strategic Planning Team in collaboration with the University administration can map out retirements and the future needs of the Dept and then request the necessary academic positions from the University Planning and Development Committee. We have already requested a position in Inorganic Chemistry that has already been approved. In addition, the Dept has requested 1 of the Strategic positions that the University advertised to accommodate one more faculty member.
Section 2	Program of Study and Higher Education Qualifications		pg 8		pg 7	
Task 6	Introduce a formal research progression check at the end of 1st year	YES	pg 9	YES	pg 9/10	We agree to encourage the PhD students with no Masters degree to take their comprehensive exam earlier (instead of giving them the possibility to do this between the 3-5 semester), i.e. in the 3rd Semester, which means that they need to finish with all their coursework in the first year.
Task 7	Review role of supervisor in research focused examinations - should not be present in ALL evaluations. Supervisor provides a written assessment to the Examination panel of the 1st year progression check (ie	YES	pg 9 (see also Sect. 1.1, pg 17)	YES	pg 9 (see also Sect. 1.1, pg 18)	We agree that we can remove the role of the supervisor in the seminar courses CHE 800, 810, but not for the Comprehensive Exam, Proposal and Thesis Defense. In those committees, the role of the supervisor is a consulting one for the other evaluating members, as in a small dept such as this there is sometimes lack of expertise in all the fields. An

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	Comprehensive Examination for PhD)					exception is for the Master Thesis defense where the supervisor votes for a mark for the degree.
Task 8	In the case of disagreement between mentor and student, provide an alternative mechanism to enable Thesis submission and evaluation	YES	pg 9 (see also Sect. 1.1, pg 17)	YES	pg 10 (see also Sect. 1.1, pg 18)	In case of disagreement, the student can express their concern to the PG committee and Dept Chair, who will take on the responsibility to address the issue (e.g. examine the extent the student is ready to submit by evaluating the work completed and discuss the issue with the supervisor to understand the source of the problem). However, at this point we are bound by University procedures regarding thesis submission (see task 2.1). What we suggest here is a way to resolve any conflicts so the process can proceed smoothly.
Task 9	Increase outward mobility of UCY students (e.g., via Erasmus). Pursue increased funding to support short term research exchanges	YES	pg 9	YES	pg 10 (see also Sect. 2.5, pg 25)	Erasmus programs are available, so students and their supervisors can be encouraged to participate. It would be beneficial if these Erasmus mobilities are to groups with which the students are already collaborating with. This mobility will be facilitated by the Dept's decision to switch the course language to English.
Task 10	Increase links with employers, including non chemistry related employers, thus making degree more attractive to a wider pool of students. Consider internships. Consider establishing an external advisory group made up of potential employers.	YES	pg 9/10 (see also Sect. 2.6, pg 24)	YES	pg 10 (see also Sect. 2.6, pg 26)	The Dept already has close ties with pharmaceutical companies. We are committed to start a campaign in collaboration with the High School Chemistry Inspector to train School Counselors on the alternative careers for Chemistry graduates in order to attract more students. In addition we will make a link with our pool of alumni and map their employment. We will establish a career day for our current Chemistry students, where we will invite our alumni with jobs in non-chemical industries to give

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Task 11	YES	pg 10	YES	pg 10	presentations on their careers, along with representatives from different sectors. One such career day is in the planning process to take place in the next few months. Included in the above suggestions. In addition, we note that we have now engaged local industry speakers to give seminars to the graduate students, as part of our Dept's regular seminar series.
Section 3				pg 10	
Task 12	YES	pg 10/11 (see also Sect. 1.3, pg 19)	YES	pg 11 (see also Sect. 1.3, pg 21)	Already in place at this University. In order for Faculty to take advantage of them the University should release funding for Visiting Professors to take on our courses during our absence.
Task 13	YES	pg 11	YES	pg 11	The newly structured research services can take on this part. Competition between faculty for a small pool of National funding makes this difficult, even though it would be useful for the newer faculty with little experience in applying for funds. However, this exists informally between faculty.
Task 14	YES	pg 11 (see also Sect. 3.1, pg 25 & Sect. 4.2, pg 26)	YES	pg 11 (see also Sect. 3.1, pg 27 & Sect. 4.2, pg 28)	Teacher training can be offered by the Center for Teaching and Learning. Specialized TA training is performed at the moment by the Dept Special Teaching Personnel in the case of Lab courses.
Section 4				pg 11	

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Task 15	Introduce an employee-focused reward system for administrative and technical staff	YES	pg 12	YES	pg 13	Administrative personnel is not employed by the Dept but centrally by the University, so it is difficult to set up a reward system locally. However, the University wants the Depts to set measurable goals for all the administrative personnel and then evaluate their performance, with the prospect of promotion.
Task 16	Increase investment in technical staff to service labs and equipment	YES	pg 12	YES	pg 13	This needs to be recognized by the University as an important need.
Task 17	Create inventory of major equipment. Build roadmap for maintenance and replacement.	YES	pg 12 (see also Sect. 3.1, pg 25)	YES	pg 13 (see also Sect. 3.1, pg 27)	We agree to do this. However, the University needs to recognize that our Dept hosts a significant amount of equipment on which all our teaching and research depends on, and a proportional budget needs to be allotted for maintenance, which is much larger than what is offered at the moment.
Task 18	Continue the development of lab health and safety	YES	pg 12	YES	pg 13	Will do
Task 19	Request more office space for PG students	YES	pg 12	YES	pg 13	This is difficult under the current building conditions. Once Biological Sciences moves to their own building we will use the space they will leave behind that belongs to Chemistry towards this end along with more lab space for new colleagues and undergraduate labs.
Task 20	Assess actual departmental research costs for each type of research programme being pursued	YES	pg 12 (see also Sect. 3.1, pg 25 & Sect. 4.3, pg 27)	YES	pg 13 (see also Sect. 3.1, pg 27 & Sect. 4.3, pg 29)	We can ask each individual research groups to provide the Dept with an estimate of research costs/year.
Section 5	Distance Learning Programs (not relevant)					
Section 6	Doctoral programs of Study					

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Task 21	Resolve the issue of requirement of written permission for Thesis submission by mentor. Is this a UCY regulation? Standardisation of practice.	NO		YES	pg 14	The procedure the Dept of Chemistry follows is according to the UCY regulations (i.e. when the supervisor deems the student is ready to defend their Thesis, they suggest a 5-membered committee that is approved by the Dept PG committee for evaluation of the Thesis, and then the defense can take place). This is a rule that the Dept cannot change.
Task 22	Ensure critical numbers of students per group	NO		YES	pg 14 (see also Sect. 6, pg 32)	This requires sufficient and regular funding to support students, which at the moment is difficult to obtain. The graduate students at the moment are supported mainly by teaching assistantships, with very little pay. More advanced students can apply for University fellowships for a year.
Additional	Consider annual staff review	YES	Sect. 1.1, pg 17	YES	Sect. 1.1, pg 18	Annual review: this is done centrally from the Research committee that distributes the Research Activity Grant 311, as well through the student course evaluations
	Recognise the burden on admin and tech staff more clearly	YES	Sect. 1.1, pg 17	YES	Sect. 1.1, pg 18	The staff will be requested to generate an outline and time schedule of their duties (especially for lab technicians), so that the Dept has a clearer view of what they are expected to do, and thus assess this burden.
	Consider RSC accreditation (not considered essential)	YES	Sect. 2.1, pg 20	YES	Sect. 2.1, pg 22	We will look into ECTN accreditation
	Improve funding of PG students - enable more focused studies to enable more rapid conclusion of grad studies	YES	Sect. 2.4, pg 23	YES	Sect. 2.4, pg 25	Advanced students can apply for University fellowships for a year.