

5.1. Library

5.1.1. Appreciation

The University has a central library for its books and periodicals. The *Periodicals Library* is very well kept and keeps a good coverage. The recent addition of some 30 new subscriptions to important statistical publications proves the awareness of the responsible people in the Department and the library for the need of maintaining and strengthening the quality of the collections. Notwithstanding this quality of the Periodicals Library, it is a pity that a number of the important periodicals are incomplete since often the older issues are missing. The Team was pleased to be informed that the Chairman had requested the Library to subscribe to the JSTOR electronic database that allows access to all back issues of almost all scientific journals and this from any University computer. It learned that the process of subscription has already been initiated by the Library. The acquisition of electronic journals has to be appreciated.

According to the Review Team, not all library facilities are fully adequate for the different training programmes initiated by the Department or for the research activities of the staff and the students.

5.1.2. Recommendations

(1) Members of the teaching staff are urged to inform the librarian sooner about the textbooks that are going to be used in their courses. This way it can be avoided that ordered textbooks arrive too late to be useful to the students.

(2) Part-time students request the availability of more textbooks that are adapted to their level and background. Teachers need to be aware of the fact that the scientific background of this important group of students may not be fully adapted to the level of current day textbooks.

(3) The reading room for the textbooks of the Library is hopelessly inadequate, both in size and in appearance. Also the splitting of the library into two fully separate sections is deplorable. Given the important function of a library in a University context, the University Authorities should ponder a more appropriate location for it.

(4) A major and returning complaint from all parties involved is the lack of sufficient access. The University should make it a top priority to extend the opening hours of its main library. Undergraduate and full-time graduate students find it awkward that the library is closed precisely at the time when they do not have classes. But the problem is even harder for the part-time students who hardly ever have the opportunity to do even a short library search.

(5) The reviewers have convinced themselves that a large number of registered books were simply not available in the stacks. Closer investigation has revealed that up to 20% of the total number of acquired books has been made unavailable by members of staff of the University who have seemingly *borrowed* the books on an eternal basis. The University Authorities have to call an immediate end to this deplorable practice that makes a significant number of Library books not available to all faculty and students of the University.

5.2. Computing Infrastructure

The *Statistical Laboratories* that the Department is making continuously available to its students, postgraduates and undergraduates, are very well equipped with the latest models of personal computers and statistical software packages and are very adequate for the different levels of the training programmes initiated by the Department. Students are -and feel- lucky to have such facilities available. Also, the staff present is competent and highly worthy of commend. The overall satisfaction is mainly due to the quality and devotion of a small number of capable collaborators. The unquestioned competence of the supervisors and the quality of the products offered is proven by the fact that visitors from other Departments, within and outside the University, often make use of the Statistical Laboratories.

5.3. Administrative Staff

5.3.1. Appreciation

The Review Committee visited the Department's Secretariat office. The Secretariat consists of four administrators who cater for about 680 undergraduates. The reviewers ascertained that the Secretariat is responsible for administrative matters such as registration of students, preparation of degrees, certificates, etc.. They formed the impression that the secretarial staff were not much at ease with the use of the English language and the computers. This may be detrimental to the accomplishment of their administrative duties, especially those pertaining to the fast implementation of the decisions of the Department, the use of e-mail and other forms of communication with collaborating Departments and Research Institutions in the EU and the US.

To its amazement the Review Team found that there are no administrative assistants for the Chairperson of the Department provided by the *University*. This is unthinkable in Universities in Europe and the US and makes the task of Chairmanship extremely difficult. Administrative support is also essential to Faculty members in order to enable them to concentrate on their academic duties and not to be distracted by the need to do things which should be the responsibility of supporting staff.

5.3.2. Recommendations

In accordance with international practice the Review Team strongly recommends that the *University* should provide at least two full-time secretaries, one primarily for the Chairperson and the other for the faculty. Furthermore, the Department should have a decisive role in the selection process of the staff of the Secretariat of the Department.

5.4. Miscellany

The *web site* of the Department is impressive and provides the searcher with all the necessary information about faculty, programmes and activities. It is pleasing to note that all this information is also available in English. This allows the international community to know everything about the Department, its regulations and practices.

A very important unit associated with the Department is the *Institute of Statistical Research Analysis and Documentation*. It is well known that such Institutes have contributed significantly to the progress and development of Statistics and have played an important role both at the scientific and the social level. The Institute gives the opportunity to the Department to interact with the real world by adapting the theory and methods of Statistics and Probability and implementing them toward a successful solution of specific problems which can arise in the various areas of scientific and societal endeavour. It also provides the necessary environment for students to gain training in the use of Statistics and to get first hand experiences from its applications. The Department –and the University- should encourage and support its activities.

Training seminars on statistical methods and applications offered indicate that the Department is aware of the need for disseminating modern statistical knowledge and ideas to all sectors of the society.