



**ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ**  
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



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Ανώτατης Εκπαίδευσης**  
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**Accreditation Report**  
**for the New Undergraduate Study Programme in**  
**Operation of:**

**Accounting and Finance**

**Institution: University of Ioannina**

**Date: 29 April 2023**



Επιχειρησιακό Πρόγραμμα  
Ανάπτυξη Ανθρώπινου Δυναμικού,  
Εκπαίδευση και Διά Βίου Μάθηση  
Με τη συγχρηματοδότηση της Ελλάδας και της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης



Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the New Undergraduate Study Programme in operation of **Accounting and Finance** of the **University of Ioannina** for the purposes of granting accreditation.

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## **PART A: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW**

### **I. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel**

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the new undergraduate study programme in operation of **Accounting and Finance** of the **University of Ioannina** comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

**1. Professor Michel Dimou (Chair)**

Université de Toulon, Toulon, France

**2. Dr Nikolaos Voukelatos**

University of Kent, United Kingdom

**3. Professor Nicholas Vonortas**

The George Washington University, Washington, United States of America

**4. Mr. Stelios Mastorogiannakis**

Economic Chamber of Greece, Athens, Greece

**5. Mr. Alexandros Pappas**

Student of Accounting and Finance, University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki, Greece

## **II. Review Procedure and Documentation**

The Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (HAHE) provided the Panel members a number of documents that were prepared by the HAHE itself as well as from the University whose programme was under review. The HAHE documents included, inter alia, quality indicators, standards and guidelines, the mapping grid assessment guide, and the report's template.

Moreover, the University provided, inter alia, the strategic plan produced by MODIP (the university's quality assurance unit) and OMEA (the department's internal evaluation unit), the quality policy, targets planned, study guide, course outlines, exams, and internal operation policies, as well as the academic faculty involved and in general all the procedures in place that ensure the smooth operation of the programme under review. The University also provided the Panel members with all the presentations related to the establishment of the programme under review, the faculty involved, the available resources, a SWOT analysis, as well as a description of all other services offered to the students.

The review of the programme took place remotely on Tuesday the 25<sup>th</sup> and Wednesday the 26<sup>th</sup> of April 2023. During these days, the Panel virtually met with the Vice Rector for Academic Affairs, the Head of the Department, the MODIP and OMEA representatives, teaching staff and student representatives, as well as representatives of employers and other external stakeholders.

The interaction with the above-mentioned groups has enabled the Panel members to form a first-hand understanding of the programme structure, the vision and mission of the department and the university, as well as the planned development of the university, department and programme under review.

### **III. New Undergraduate Study Programme in operation Profile**

The programme under review commenced its operation in 2019.

The duration of the new undergraduate study programme is 4 years, structured around 54 courses and 240 ECTS. Successful completion of the programme leads to the award of a Bachelor in Accounting and Finance. Graduates can either find employment in the private sector - firms, banks, accounting offices and related businesses - or in the public sector.

The student body currently numbers 1703, with 1160 students having transferred from two previous undergraduate programmes offered by the TEI of Epirus and the remaining 543 students having entered the new programme since its introduction in 2019. The staff/student ratio is around 1/33 in terms of “active” students (i.e., those who entered the new programme at the University of Ioannina) and around 1/90 in terms of the entire student population (i.e., including students who transferred from the earlier TEI programme).

The campus includes several new buildings that contain staff offices, classrooms, auditoriums, and a library. However, there are no dedicated facilities for student accommodation, while catering facilities are located at a significant distance from campus. The campus is situated in the town of Preveza, at a pleasant and enjoyable location. Nevertheless, the location of the departmental campus at Preveza is at a great distance from that of the central University campus at Ioannina (around 100 kilometres away, with a relatively poor public transport network).

The Panel recognizes that certain aspects of the accreditation (such as graduates’ prospects in the job market) cannot be explored fully due to the lack of data given the fact that this is a new programme that was only introduced in 2019.

## PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

### Principle 1: Strategic Planning, Feasibility and Sustainability of the Academic Unit

Institutions must have developed an appropriate strategy for the establishment and operation of new academic units and the provision of new undergraduate study programmes. This strategy should be documented by specific feasibility and sustainability studies.

*By decision of the institutional Senate, the Institutions should address in their strategy issues related to their academic structure in academic units and study programmes, which support the profile, the vision, the mission, and the strategic goal setting of the Institution, within a specific time frame. The strategy of the Institution should articulate the potential benefits, weaknesses, opportunities or risks from the operation of new academic units and study programmes, and plan all the necessary actions towards the achievement of their goals.*

*The strategy of their academic structure should be documented by specific feasibility and sustainability studies, especially for new academic units and new study programmes.*

*More specifically, the feasibility study of the new undergraduate study programmes should be accompanied by a four-year business plan to meet specific needs in infrastructure, services, human resources, procedures, financial resources, and management systems.*

*During the evaluation of the Institutions and their individual academic units in terms of meeting the criteria for the organisation of undergraduate study programmes, particular attention must be placed upon:*

***a. The academic profile and the mission of the academic unit***

*The profile and mission of the department should be specified. The scientific field of the department should be included in the internationally established scientific fields of Higher Education, as they are designated by the international categorisation of scientific fields in education, by UNESCO (ISCED 2013).*

***b. The strategy of the Institution for its academic development***

*The academic development strategy for the operation of the department and the new study programme should be set out. This strategy should result from the investigation of the factors that influence the studies and the research in the scientific field, the investigation of the institutional, economic, developmental, and social parameters that apply in the external environment of the Institution, as well as the possibilities and capabilities that exist within the internal environment (as reflected in a SWOT Analysis: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats). This specific analysis should demonstrate the reason for selecting the scientific field of the new department.*

***c. The documentation of the feasibility of the operation of the department and the study programme***

*The feasibility of the operation of the new department should be justified based on:*

- *the needs of the national and regional economy (economic sectors, employment, supply-demand, expected academic and professional qualifications)*
- *comparison with other national and international study programmes of the same scientific field*
- *the state-of-the-art developments*

- *the existing academic map; the differentiation of the proposed department from the already existing ones needs to be analysed, in addition to the implications of the current image of the academic map in the specific scientific field.*

**d. The documentation of the sustainability of the new department**

*Mention must be made to the infrastructure, human resources, funding perspective, services, and all other available resources in terms of:*

- *educational and research facilities (buildings, rooms, laboratories, equipment, etc.)*
- *staff (existing and new, by category, specialty, rank and laboratory). A distinct five-year plan is required, documenting the commitment of the School and of the Institution for filling in the necessary faculty positions to cover at least the entire pre-defined core curriculum*
- *funding (funding possibility from public or non-public sources)*
- *services (central, departmental / student support, digital, administrative, etc.)*

**e. The structure of studies**

*The structure of the studies should be briefly presented, namely:*

- **The organisation of studies:** *The courses and the categories to which they belong; the distribution of the courses into semesters; the alignment of the courses with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).*
- **Learning process:** *Documentation must be provided as to how the student-centered approach is ensured (modes of teaching and evaluation of students beyond the traditional methods).*
- **Learning outcomes:** *Knowledge, skills and competences acquired by graduates, as well as the professional rights awarded must be mentioned.*

**f. The number of admitted students**

- *The proposed number of admitted students over a five-year period should be specified.*
- *Any similar departments in other HEIs with the possibility of student transfers from / to the proposed department should be mentioned.*

**g. Postgraduate studies and research**

- *It is necessary to indicate research priorities in the scientific field, the opportunities for interdisciplinary research, the challenges towards new knowledge, possible research collaborations, etc.*
- *In addition, the postgraduate and doctoral programmes offered by the academic unit, the research projects performed, and the research performance of the faculty members should be mentioned.*

**Relevant documentation**

- *Introductory Report by the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) addressing the above points with the necessary documentation*
- *Updated Strategic Plan of the Institution that will include its proposed academic reconstruction, in view of the planned operation of new department(s) (incl. updated SWOT analysis at institutional level)*
- *Feasibility and sustainability studies for the establishment and operation of the new academic unit and the new study programme*
- *Four-year business plan*



## **Study Programme Compliance**

### **I. Findings**

The academic unit provided the Panel with a set of helpful documents about its short history, the functioning of the Department, and the strategy of the undergraduate and postgraduate degree programmes. The Panel was also provided with a comprehensive SWOT analysis of the Department.

The Department and the undergraduate study programme were both created in 2019. The creation of the Department reflects the decisions of the University of Ioannina following the 2019 law on the overhaul of Greek Technological Educational Institutes (TEIs) and their conversion to Higher Educational Institutes (AEIs). The Department of Accounting and Finance at the TEI of Epirus was transferred as a new Department at the University of Ioannina. As a result, the Department still hosts a substantial number of students from the previous undergraduate TEI programme. The Department's members are mostly young researchers who were recruited after 2019. Several members of the Department previously followed a professional career in the private sector.

This is the only Department in the University - and also in Epirus - offering an undergraduate degree in accounting and finance. Demand in the regional and national labour market is very strong for such skills, and the Department is very confident about the matching of its graduates with the needs of employers. The teaching staff aims to equip students with theoretical knowledge as well as professional skills. Significant emphasis is placed on new technologies.

### **II. Analysis**

The Department focuses on accounting since this corresponds to the needs of the regional and national labour market. This is a good strategy, since it matches the learning outcomes of the programme to the real economy, and it prioritizes the development of skills that are in demand by employers. Nevertheless, the programme would benefit from some differentiation relative to similar programmes offered by other Greek universities. This differentiation would allow students to be more competitive in the in the job market. In addition to the undergraduate study programme under review, the Department offers one postgraduate programme.

The main issue facing the Department remains its declining attractiveness to potential students. The number of new students has been consistently decreasing during the past few years. Several reasons for this decline in student numbers emerged from the Department's SWOT analysis, as well as during the discussions between the Panel and the Department. First, the 2019 law resulted in the creation of several new departments of accounting and finance in Greece, leading to strong competition for students. Second, the 2019 law increased the minimum entry tariff for students to enrol in the programme. As a result, a large number of students who might have wanted to enrol in the programme would not have been able to do so due to not having achieved the minimum grade in the national university entrance exams. Third, and perhaps most importantly, the Department's location at Preveza is very far from the main university campus at Ioannina. This geographical distance has led to a noticeable isolation of the Department and its faculty. On a related note, the Preveza campus lacks certain facilities and services that are normally available to students in other universities, which has a further negative effect on the programme's attractiveness.

### **III. Conclusions**

The Panel recognizes the will of all the Department's members to work on and improve the undergraduate programme. Nevertheless, the programme's lack of attractiveness is an important concern. On the one hand, faculty members seem eager to be relocated to the main campus at Ioannina, where the Department of Economics is also located. This could create research synergies and support the differentiation of the undergraduate programme. On the other hand, several stakeholders argue that the Department should stay in Preveza since it represents an important vector of economic development for the local community.

## Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 1: Strategic planning, feasibility and sustainability of the academic unit</b>	
<b>a. The academic profile and the mission of the academic unit</b>	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	<b>X</b>
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
<b>b. The strategy of the Institution for its academic development</b>	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	<b>X</b>
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
<b>c. The documentation of the feasibility of the operation of the department and the study programme</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
<b>d. The documentation of the sustainability of the new department</b>	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	<b>X</b>
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
<b>e. The structure of studies</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
<b>f. The number of admitted students</b>	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	<b>X</b>
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
<b>g. Postgraduate studies</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

<b>Principle 1: Strategic planning, feasibility and sustainability of the academic unit (overall)</b>	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	<b>X</b>
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### **Panel Recommendations**

**R1.1:** The Panel strongly recommends that the issue of the Department's physical location should be resolved as a matter of urgency. The University of Ioannina has decided to relocate the Department to the city of Ioannina. The local community in Preveza appears to be opposed to this move. It is beyond the Panel's remit to weigh in on this debate. However, all the Panel members agree that, under the current circumstances, the sustainability of the academic unit remains quite fragile.

## Principle 2: Quality Assurance Policy of the Institution and the Academic Unit

The Institution should have in place an accredited Internal Quality Assurance System, and should formulate and apply a Quality Assurance Policy, which is part of its strategy, specialises in the operation of the new academic units and the new study programmes, and is accompanied by annual quality assurance goals for the continuous development and improvement of the academic units and the study programmes.

*The quality assurance policy of the Institution must be formulated in the form of a published statement, which is implemented by all stakeholders. It focuses on the achievement of special annual quality goals related to the quality assurance of the new study programme offered by the academic unit. In order to implement this policy, the Institution, among others, commits itself to put into practice quality procedures that will demonstrate: the adequacy and quality of the academic unit's resources; the suitability of the structure and organisation of the curriculum; the appropriateness of the qualifications of the teaching staff; the quality of support services of the academic unit and its staffing with appropriate administrative personnel. The Institution also commits itself to conduct an annual internal evaluation of the new undergraduate programme (UGP), realised by the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG) in collaboration with the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) of the Institution.*

*The quality assurance policy of the academic unit includes its commitment to implement quality procedures that will demonstrate: a) the adequacy of the structure and organisation of the curriculum, b) the pursuit of learning outcomes and qualifications in accordance with the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education, c) the promotion of the quality and effectiveness of the teaching work, d) the adequacy of the qualifications of the teaching staff, e) the promotion of the quality and quantity of the research work of the members of the academic unit, f) the ways of linking teaching with research, g) the level of demand for graduates' qualifications in the labour market, h) the quality of support services, such as administration, libraries and student care, i) the implementation of an annual review and audit of the quality assurance system of the UGP through the cooperation of the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG) with the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) of the Institution.*

### **Relevant documentation**

- Revised Quality Assurance Policy of the Institution
- Quality Assurance Policy of the academic unit
- Quality target setting of the Institution and the academic unit (utilising the S.M.A.R.T. methodology)

## **Study Programme Compliance**

### **I. Findings & Analysis**

The Department has developed a Quality Assurance Policy. Two members of the unit work in the Quality Assurance System. The team has created student questionnaires to evaluate the performance of each course and the programme as a whole.

The Quality Assurance System provides information for strategic planning to the Head of the Department. However, it is probably early to evaluate the performance of the Quality Assurance System of the Department due to its recent introduction (in 2019) and the adverse impact of the covid pandemic. Important information, such as on the career prospects of recent graduates and their progression to postgraduate degrees, is not available yet.

Another issue has to do with the number of students that complete the course evaluations. It seems that the completion ratio is very low. This limited engagement with the process most likely reflects students' poor physical attendance on campus, rather than the Department's efforts to promote the evaluation process.

The Panel acknowledges that the Quality Assurance team has provided helpful and relevant material to support the accreditation of the undergraduate programme. The Panel would also like to encourage the Department to continue working at the same level in the future. However, the students' lack of engagement with the process needs to be addressed.

## II. Conclusions

The discussion with external partners was very interesting and it showed that the strategic plan of the Department diverges in some areas from what is expected by its stakeholders.

### Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 2: Quality assurance policy of the Institution and the academic unit</b>	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	<b>X</b>
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### Panel Recommendations

R2.1: The Panel encourages the Quality Assurance team to keep up the good work, and to enhance its efforts to improve student engagement with the process. Important work should be delivered next year when the first graduates will enter the labour market or continue their studies at the postgraduate level.

### **Principle 3: Design, Approval and Monitoring of the Quality of the New Undergraduate Programmes**

Institutions should design the new undergraduate programmes following a defined written process, which will involve the participants, information sources and the approval committees for the programme. The objectives, the expected learning outcomes, the intended professional qualifications and the ways to achieve them are set out in the programme design. The above details, as well as information on the programme's structure, are published in the Student Guide.

*The Institutions develop their new undergraduate study programmes, following a well-defined procedure. The academic profile, the identity and orientation of the programme, the objectives, the subject areas, the structure and organisation, the expected learning outcomes and the intended professional qualifications according to the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education are described at this stage. An important new element in the structure of the programmes is the introduction of courses for the acquisition of digital skills. The above components should be taken into consideration and constitute the subject of the programme design, which, among other things, should include: elements of the Institution's strategy, labour market data and employment prospects of graduates, smooth progression of students throughout the stages of the programme, the anticipated student workload according to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), the option of providing work experience to the students, the linking of teaching and research, the international experience in study programmes of similar disciplines, the relevant regulatory framework, and the official procedure for the approval of the programme by the Institution.*

*The procedure of approval or revision of the programmes provides for the verification of compliance with the basic requirements of the Standards by the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU).*

#### **Relevant documentation**

- *Senate decision for the establishment of the UGP*
- *Curriculum structure: courses, course categories (including courses for the acquisition of digital skills), ECTS awarded, expected learning outcomes according to the EQF, internship, mobility opportunities.*
- *Labour market data regarding the employment of graduates, international experience in a related scientific field.*
- *Student Guide*
- *Course outlines*
- *Teaching staff (list of areas of specialisation, its relation to the courses taught, employment relationship)*
- *QAU minutes for the internal evaluation of the new study programme and its compliance with the Standards*

#### **Study Programme Compliance**

##### **I. Findings**

The Department of Accounting and Finance of the University of Ioannina is the culmination of significant changes during the past decade or so. The most recent one was the incorporation into the University in 2018-2019 and the introduction of the new programme of studies the

year after (2019-2020). This took place when the pandemic unfolded, which should place these findings into perspective. The frequent changes and mergers reportedly have exhausted the faculty which makes herculean efforts to adapt.

The current structure of the programme followed the procedures set by the state and the University, and it received all required approvals for its introduction. Its overall structure follows international standards. There are set procedures for periodic examination and adjustment of the programme.

The programme is delivered in eight semesters, each of which contains five courses for a total of forty courses that must be passed successfully for the award. We could not observe clear specialization tracks in the programme of studies, although there are specialization courses. There are no pre-requisites.

The programme is new, with the first graduates expected at the end of this academic year. Students entering with the “old regime” of the TEI were given the opportunity to amend their programme of studies and graduate with the new university degree.

The Department’s SWOT analysis and our interactions with faculty, students and stakeholders highlighted the effort of the faculty to deliver high quality education of both theoretical and applied nature. It also, however, indicated a difficulty of the Department to attract a sufficient number of students since the introduction of the new minimum entry tariff by the Ministry of Education. This increase in the entry tariff coincided, more or less, with the introduction of the new programme of studies. The reason for this difficulty and possible ways to reverse the situation took a lot of time in our discussions.

The geographical isolation of the programme was often put forward as the main reason for the relatively low student intake. There may, however, be other reasons such as the lack of clear specializations (study tracks) in the programme. In the presentations we did not see clear tracks of progression of students in different specialized areas of study in either accounting or finance.

Attention was also paid to the student internship (πρακτική άσκηση) which is voluntary, lasts only two months, accounts for two credits, but without contributing towards the final degree classification. This is reportedly the result of University regulations that are now being re-examined. Not many students seem to prefer it. Yet it could be a critical component of their studies.

## **II. Analysis**

The Department, existing as TEI since 2013 and transitioning to university status five years later (2018), has followed international standards in formulating its programme of studies. The programme contains theoretical and applied themes. The tradition of the Department is, of course, in the latter. Several laboratories help students engage in the applied aspects of their studies.

The graduates receive all necessary professional recognitions for the start of their career in the fields of accounting and finance.

We observed significant awareness among faculty and efforts to respond to the rapid technological advances to these fields and the introduction of advanced data processing capabilities. This is an important strength and should be exploited.



### III. Conclusions

The Panel agrees with the general conclusions of the SWOT analysis regarding the potential of the programme of studies in Accounting and Finance – as the only one in Epirus – and the projection of an international level of quality. On the other hand, there is the glaring weakness of attracting new applicants which requires careful consideration. The geographical isolation of the Department could be a strong factor. There may be others too, including the nature of the programme.

#### Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 3: Design, approval and monitoring of the quality of the new undergraduate programmes</b>	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	<b>X</b>
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

#### Panel Recommendations

**R3.1:** The Panel recommends that the geographical isolation of the programme and its separation from the Economics Department should be addressed as a matter of urgency.

**R3.2:** The Department is encouraged to consider creating clear tracks of study (specializations) as a possible tool for raising the distinctiveness of the programme.

**R3.3:** The Panel recommends that faculty awareness regarding the rapid technological advancement in the field and the incorporation of IT and modern concepts (such as blockchain) into the programme of studies should be further exploited as a specialization and point of distinction vis a vis other similar departments in the country.

**R3.4:** The Panel recommends that the student internship provision should be revamped. The current duration of two months is totally inadequate. The Department should consider doubling or even tripling its length and incorporating the provision formally in the programme of study – e.g., by replacing courses, counting towards the degree.

## Principle 4: Student-centred Approach in Learning, Teaching and Assessment of Students

The academic unit should ensure that the new undergraduate programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process. The assessment methods should reflect this approach.

*In the implementation of student-centered learning and teaching, the academic unit:*

- ✓ *respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths*
- ✓ *considers and uses different modes of delivery where appropriate*
- ✓ *flexibly uses a variety of pedagogical methods*
- ✓ *regularly evaluates and adjusts the modes of delivery and application of pedagogical methods aiming at improvement*
- ✓ *regularly evaluates the quality and effectiveness of teaching, as documented especially through student surveys*
- ✓ *reinforces the student's sense of autonomy, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teaching staff*
- ✓ *promotes mutual respect in the student-teacher relationship*
- ✓ *applies appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints*

### **Relevant documentation**

- *Questionnaires for assessment by the students*
- *Regulation for dealing with students' complaints and appeals*
- *Regulation for the function of the academic advisor*
- *Reference to the planned teaching modes and assessment methods*

## **Study Programme Compliance**

### **I. Findings**

During interviews the faculty stressed the attention that the Department pays to learning methods that engage students in the course delivery process and enhances the learning experience. This includes a significant number of courses with labs and exercises as well as a reportedly significant exposure of students to computers and modern software. The faculty estimated about 180 positions in six labs, which should be full coverage of the student body in the new programme.

Students are encouraged to engage in practical exercises, present their work to fellow students, and think critically. They are assessed through various methods beyond the traditional final exam. The courses are evaluated by students regularly with satisfactory results. Something that attracted the attention of the Panel members was the encouragement of undergraduates to engage in research in the form of repeated exercises in the labs, production of papers and cases, and even collaborative participation in research papers.

## II. Analysis

As far as we could tell, course delivery and the engagement of students in the classroom follows modern pedagogical prototypes. The Panel was especially impressed by the attention of the Department to the exposure of students to information technology.

## III. Conclusions

The Department is making genuine efforts to carry out a programme of studies with modern techniques and awareness to the fast-changing technological requirements for the effective exercise of the accounting and finance professions. The faculty is particularly anxious about the lack of financial resources, also including resources to equip labs with modern IT and access to costly international databases.

### Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 4: Student-centred approach in learning, teaching and assessment of students</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### Panel Recommendations

R4.1: The Panel encourages the Department to maintain the emphasis of the programme on modern learning techniques and IT-intensive education.

R4.2: The Panel recommends that additional resources should be found to support the research infrastructure of the Department. The Department should continue its entrepreneurial efforts to raise funds beyond public allocations.

## **Principle 5: Student Admission, Progression, Recognition of Academic Qualifications and Award of Degrees and Certificates of Competence of the New Study Programmes**

**Academic units should develop and apply published regulations addressing all aspects and phases of studies of the programme (admission, progression, recognition and degree award).**

*All the issues from the beginning to the end of studies should be governed by the internal regulations of the academic units. Indicatively:*

- ✓ *the registration procedure of the admitted students and the necessary documents - according to the law - and the support of the newly admitted students*
- ✓ *student rights and obligations, and monitoring of student progression*
- ✓ *internship issues, granting of scholarships*
- ✓ *the procedures and terms for writing the thesis (diploma or degree)*
- ✓ *the procedure of award and recognition of degrees, the duration of studies, the conditions for progression and assurance of the progress of students in their studies*

*as well as*

- ✓ *the terms and conditions for enhancing student mobility*

*Appropriate recognition procedures rely on relevant academic practice for recognition of credits among various European academic departments and Institutions in line with the principles of the Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region. Graduation represents the culmination of the students' study period. Students need to receive documentation explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes, and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed (Diploma Supplement).*

*All the above must be made public within the context of the Student Guide.*

### **Relevant documentation**

- *Internal regulation for the operation of the new study programme*
- *Regulation of studies, internship, mobility and student assignments*
- *Printed Diploma Supplement*

*Certificate from the President of the academic unit that the diploma supplement is awarded to all graduates without exception together with the degree or the certificate of completion of studies*

### **Study Programme Compliance**

#### **I. Findings**

The new incoming students are welcomed in a special gathering where the leadership and the faculty of the Department explain the programme and general academic life on campus. The website of the Department also has a special section for new students informing them about registration, course selection, and everything else they need to start successfully their academic life.

An academic advisor is available for all students. Individual faculty members of the Department are called to serve as mentors of incoming students. They, together with OMEA, follow the progress of students through their course of studies.

The Programme Guide is complete with a satisfactory explanation of the undergraduate programme of studies and standardized exposition of courses including the learning objectives of the course, and description of the readings, estimated effort, type of delivery, lab engagement (when available), and type of examination.

The Department has in place satisfactory systems to monitor student attainment and progression. These systems are managed by the Department's administrative staff. Students and faculty members have access to data on student performance such as courses passed/failed, marks achieved, and overall student progression.

The recognition of credits is based on established European principles through the ECTS system. It should also be noted that the Department has succeeded in securing a number of exemptions from the ACCA professional qualifications exams.

The supplement diploma is issued at no cost to students.

There are set processes for participation in programmes ERASMUS+ and, as said in an earlier section (3), of practical exercise. While we were told of several examples, student mobility in both respects seems limited.

## **II. Analysis**

The Department has made a good effort to establish a modern undergraduate programme in a short time period and while undergoing wrenching changes for years. Not to be overlooked, budget limitations and the COVID pandemic that hit right in its first steps, have played a role in the limited mobility until now.

The Panel heard very positive comments from both students and other stakeholders about faculty interaction with the student body.

However, a large number of legacy students from the previous TEI programme continue their studies and create a substantial burden on the function of the new programme. This is an issue of concern for the Panel, since these students' progression (and, ultimately, prospects of graduating) are far from clear.

Another important concern refers to the steadily declining number of admissions in the undergraduate programme. During the visit, the Department stated that the main reason for this is the increase of the minimum entry tariff that was imposed by the Ministry of Education. However, the Panel does not necessarily share the view that the new entry tariff is unreasonably high, considering that it is still well below what would normally constitute a pass rate of 50%.

## **III. Conclusions**

The new programme of studies seems to be well organized following European standards. The faculty is engaged and keeps close to the students in the programme.

The legacy students' problem remains. Moreover, there is a low student participation in the classroom.

### Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 5: Student admission, progression, recognition of academic qualifications, and award of degrees and certificates of competence of the new study programmes</b>	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	<b>X</b>
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### Panel Recommendations

**R5.1:** The Panel recommends that the Department should address the significant problem of continuing legacy students from the TEI, their progression, and path to graduation.

**R5.2:** The Department is encouraged to explore more carefully the issue of student internships, especially in terms of extending its length and strengthening its internationalization element.

**R5.3:** The Panel recommends that the Department should enhance the mobility of students and faculty.

## **Principle 6: Ensuring the Competence and High Quality of the Teaching Staff of the New Undergraduate Study Programmes**

**Institutions should assure themselves of the competence, the level of knowledge and skills of the teaching staff of the academic units, and apply fair and transparent processes for their recruitment, training and further development.**

*The Institution should attend to the adequacy of the teaching staff of the academic unit, the appropriate staff-student ratio, the suitable categories of staff, the appropriate subject areas and specialisations, the fair and objective recruitment process, the high research performance, the training – development, the staff development policy (including participation in mobility schemes, conferences and educational leaves- as mandated by law).*

*More specifically, the academic unit should set up and follow clear, transparent and fair processes for the recruitment of properly qualified staff and offer them conditions of employment that recognise the importance of teaching and research; offer opportunities and promote the professional development of the teaching staff; encourage scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research; encourage innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies; promote the increase of the volume and quality of the research output within the academic unit; follow quality assurance processes for all staff members (with respect to attendance requirements, performance, self-assessment, training, etc.); develop policies to attract highly qualified academic staff.*

### **Relevant documentation**

- *Procedures and criteria for teaching staff recruitment*
- *Regulations or employment contracts, and obligations of the teaching staff*
- *Policy for staff recruitment, support and development*
- *Performance of the teaching staff in scientific-research and teaching work, also based on internationally recognised systems of scientific evaluation (e.g., Google Scholar, Scopus, etc.)*

## **Study Programme Compliance**

### **I. Findings**

The Department has 14 permanent academic members (5 full Professors, 3 Associated Professor, 1 Assistant Professor, 5 Lecturers and 3 Technical Laboratory staff members). It also has 3 non-permanent teaching staff members. A percentage of 17,65% of the staff is women. A small percentage of 1,76% of academic staff members passed through the process to a higher professional status level. The Department aims for a better gender balance, especially at the professorial level. Through future appointments, the Department aims to further improve the relatively low staff-student ratio (33,3%). The Department has a clear policy for recruitment, which complies with the regulatory framework and includes criteria of research and publications activities. The Department employs three (3) permanent administrative staff members and two (2) non-permanent members.

In the educational process, alternative teaching methods are used such as laboratory courses by using specialized software, case studies, working group-learnings, internships, laboratory

simulations, talks by external speakers, hybrid training techniques, presentations of subjects by students, etc.

During 2019-2020, the Department produced 35 publications in internationally recognized peer-reviewed journals, achieving 340 citations. The research work of the Department has been improving in the last two years. Quantitative data on how the faculty's research output is rated in Scopus and Google Scholar was not provided to the Panel.

The Department aims to sustain and strengthen the research activity using incentives and financial assistance for all members and encouraging them to increase collaboration within and outside the Department. The Department also participates in the organization of International Conferences on its campus as well as with European Universities and Research Institutions.

## II. Analysis

The Panel feels that the student-staff ratio in the undergraduate study programme (when measured using the entire student population), combined with the resources that are required for its postgraduate provision, significantly constrain the faculty's ability for research activity.

The skills, research experience and activities of the teaching staff fit well with the needs of the undergraduate programme.

The recruitment of new staff is based on reasonable criteria of research output, research programmes, and research income, citations in high quality journals, participation in international scientific conferences, etc. These criteria and the overall process are consistent with legal requirements (APELLA).

The Panel finds that there is a strong spirit of collegiality in the Department, with all faculty members participating enthusiastically in academic activities. This team spirit ensures the very good operation of the undergraduate programme as well as the smooth management of the various administrative processes.

Considering the background of the Department and the transition phase it currently finds itself in, the teaching and research performance of the Department needs further strengthening. This is consistent with the Department's strategy. Given the significant number of professors, we would have expected to see a more balanced approach to the development of all teaching staff, perhaps with an emphasis of mentoring and guidance to more junior research academics.

## III. Conclusions

Despite significant efforts, the Panel feels that there is still substantial work that is required to ensure a sustainable, balanced, and high-performing long-term research strategy in the Department. The Department achieves **substantial compliance** with this principle.



## Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 6: Ensuring the competence and high quality of the teaching staff of the new undergraduate study programmes</b>	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	<b>X</b>
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

## Panel Recommendations

**R6.1:** The Panel recommends that the Department, in collaboration with the University, should intensify the efforts to recruit new highly qualified academic staff.

**R6.2:** The Panel commends that the Department should develop a long-term research strategy that encourages the research activities of all members at all ranks and provides clear incentives (awards and finance by increasing its own funds) for career progression to junior academics and for a more balanced academic staff along all ranks.

**R6.3:** The Panel recommends that the Department should make a greater effort to develop an international orientation by incentivizing all teaching staff members to increase their international mobility through the ERASMUS Programme and study leaves.

**R6.4:** The Panel recommends that the Department should strengthen the link between teaching and research by encouraging the participation of students in internships.

## Principle 7: Learning Resources and Student Support of the New Undergraduate Programmes

Institutions should have adequate funding to meet the needs for the operation of the academic unit and the new study programme as well as the means to cover all their teaching and learning needs. They should -on the one hand- provide satisfactory infrastructure and services for learning and student support and -on the other hand- facilitate direct access to them by establishing internal rules to this end (e.g., lecture rooms, laboratories, libraries, networks, boarding, career and social policy services, etc.).

*Institutions and their academic units must have sufficient resources, on a planned and long-term basis, to support learning and academic activity in general, in order to offer students the best possible level of studies. The above means include facilities such as, the necessary general and specific libraries and possibilities for access to electronic databases, study rooms, educational and scientific equipment, information and communication services, support and counselling services. When allocating the available resources, the needs of all students must be taken into consideration (e.g. whether they are full-time or part-time students, employed students, students with disabilities), in addition to the shift towards student-centred learning and the adoption of flexible modes of learning and teaching. Support activities and facilities may be organised in various ways, depending on the institutional context. Students should be informed about all available services. In delivering support services, the role of support and administration staff is crucial and therefore this segment of staff needs to be qualified and have opportunities to develop its competences.*

### Relevant documentation

- Detailed description of the infrastructure and services made available by the Institution to the academic unit to support learning and academic activity (human resources, infrastructure, services, etc.) and the corresponding specific commitment of the Institution to financially cover these infrastructure-services from state or other resources
- Administrative support staff of the new undergraduate programme (job descriptions, qualifications and responsibilities)
- Informative / promotional material given to students with reference to the available services

## Study Programme Compliance

### I. Findings

The Panel examined all the documents and information links to assess the learning resources and student support of the Department. The available space for teaching and research needs includes: 10 teaching rooms with a total capacity of 688 seats (fully equipped with up-to-date electronic equipment including video projectors, display screens and PCs), 3 amphitheatres, (two 90-seaters, and a larger one with 240 seats).

The Department also has 6 educational laboratories with a total capacity of 180 seats (fully equipped with desk computers) and 3 research laboratories that support the research activity of faculty members, doctoral students, and postgraduate students. The 3 research labs are:

- (a) Financial Application and Innovation
- (b) Local labour Market Employment and Regional Development
- (c) Accounting, Tax, Auditing and Financial Application.

All teaching and research spaces are connected to the University's network. They also have access to a large number of general and specialized software (ERP platforms, Kefalaio, ATLANTIS, E-net, soft one, SPSS, MATLAB, R Studio, etc.).

Additional infrastructure facilities include an office dedicated to support internship activities, one office for Student Support services, a library which lends and provide electronic access to various types of publications through an integrated electronic system of service.

The Department's academic community has in place student support services which include an Innovation and Entrepreneurship Unit, Health care, Academic Advisor, Platform for Distance Learning (Open E-class), Internet access, study advisor, student advocate, etc. The administrative staff includes 5 permanent members for supporting academic and student services.

## II. Analysis

The above findings are based on written material as well as information provided during discussions with the Department. All information has been judged in relation to the body of students and the academic staff of the Department.

## III. Conclusions

The needs of the Department are financed through the Central Budget of the University. Some own funding resources come from European Projects. The own funds are not sufficient to adequately support the Department's research and infrastructure needs.

The impression of the Panel is that the Department has adequate infrastructure and equipment for educational and research activities. The Department engages in continuous monitoring and maintaining its equipment and infrastructure. With the exception of suitable accommodation and catering facilities, the Panel concludes that the programme achieves **full compliance** with this principle.

### Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 7: Learning resources and student support of the new undergraduate programmes</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### Panel Recommendations

**R7.1:** The Panel recommends that the Department should continue maintaining and upgrading its IT equipment and software as needed.

**R7.2:** The Panel recommends that the Department should place a greater emphasis on exploring the potential of securing outside funds from European research grants.

## **Principle 8: Collection, Analysis and Use of Information for the Organisation and Operation of New Undergraduate Programmes**

**The Institutions and their academic units bear full responsibility for collecting, analysing and using information, aimed at the efficient management of undergraduate programmes of study and related activities, in an integrated, effective and easily accessible way.**

*Effective procedures for collecting and analysing information on the operation of Institutions, academic units and study programmes feed data into the internal quality assurance system. The following data is of interest: key performance indicators for the student body profile, student progression, success and drop-out rates, student satisfaction with the programme, availability of learning resources and student support. The completion of the fields of National Information System for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (NISQA) should be correct and complete with the exception of the fields that concern graduates in which a null value is registered.*

### **Relevant documentation**

- *Report from the National Information System for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (NISQA) at the level of the Institution, the department and the new UGP*
- *Operation of an information management system for the collection of administrative data for the implementation of the programme (Students' Record)*
- *Other tools and procedures designed to collect data on the academic and administrative functions of the academic unit and the study programme*

## **Study Programme Compliance**

### **I. Findings**

The Department has established an information system for the collection, analysis and use of data. This system builds on an effective process to support a variety of activities and feeds into proposals for improvements in quality assurance.

The process of collection and analysis of data takes place periodically and systematically at the end of each term for every individual course. The process focuses on the content of each course, the teaching methods, the evaluation of teaching staff, student satisfaction, and the quality of facilities.

Student participation in the process of evaluating the courses and teaching staff remains, for the last two academic years 2019 – 2020 and 2020-2021, under 10% of the total number of active students. Additionally, the student representative did not participate in the General Assembly of the Department at the end of academic year 2020-2021. There is no alumni association that could potentially provide useful feedback. Stakeholders did not participate in the process of evaluating the study programme.

The Department has a clear system for collecting and analysing the data concerning the student population and profiles, number of active students, students transferring to/from other universities, the progress and participation in the evaluation, library use, etc.

### **II. Analysis**

By an appropriate statistical analysis of data, various key performance indicators and statistical tables are produced which facilitate OMEA's and MODIP's monitoring and evaluation of the performance of the programme, facilities and infrastructure services.

Key performance indicators are also utilized for the Department’s goal setting in the annual Business Plan. All members of teaching staff are informed and participate in the annual monitoring and improvement process. At the end of this process, the Department’s General Assembly discusses the results for the proposed programme changes and develops an evaluation report. For the collection and processing of the data, IT technologies are used through an electronic questionnaire that the students are asked to complete. The process is monitored and managed by MODIP. However, the low participation of students and the absence of alumni and stakeholders deprives the Department of important information from the market and industry.

Finally, the Department develops and implements an annual action plan with key performance indicators regularly monitored and evaluated.

### III. Conclusions

The Panel considers that the Departmental system of collection, analysis and the use of information data are **substantially compliant**.

#### Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 8: Collection, analysis and use of information for the organisation and operation of new undergraduate programmes</b>	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	<b>X</b>
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

#### Panel Recommendations

**R8.1:** The Panel recommends that the Department should continue the process of collecting and analysing data by strengthening the system through digital technologies for a more integrated, complete and efficient system.

**R8.2:** The Panel recommends that the process of complaints and its final outcomes should be also integrated in the quality assurance process. The way these complaints are resolved should be better disseminated to various stakeholders.

**R8.3:** The Department should encourage and further motivate student participation in the process of course evaluation.

**R8.4:** The Department should encourage graduates to establish an Alumni Association.

**R8.5:** The Panel recommends the creation of an advisory council including academics and other external stakeholders.

## **Principle 9: Public Information Concerning the New Undergraduate Programmes**

**Institutions and academic units should publish information about their teaching and academic activities in a direct and readily accessible way. The relevant information should be up-to-date, clear and objective.**

*Information on the Institutions' activities is useful for prospective and current students, graduates, other stakeholders and the public. Therefore, Institutions and their academic units must provide information about their activities, including the new undergraduate programmes they offer, the intended learning outcomes, the degrees awarded, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, the pass rates and the learning opportunities available to their students. Information is also provided, to the extent possible, on graduate employment perspectives.*

### **Relevant documentation**

- *Dedicated segment on the website of the department for the promotion of the new study programme*
- *Bilingual version of the website of the academic unit with complete, clear and objective information*
- *Provision for website maintenance and updating*

## **Study Programme Compliance**

### **I. Findings**

The website of the Department is well organized. All key information is presented in a clear way, with separate tabs for the Greek and English versions. The website is generally user-friendly and easily accessible. In addition to on-page information and linked documents, the website also contains photo galleries and informational videos, and it is regularly used for departmental announcements.

The website has a dedicated webpage that provides extensive information about the new study programme. This includes all relevant information concerning the programme's structure, learning objectives, list of courses per term and their ECTS, mode of attendance, teaching methods, criteria of assessment etc. It should be noted that most of this information is available in a single downloadable pdf file of the programme outline rather than being displayed on-page.

A separate webpage provides information about the Department's members of staff, including their positions in the Department and contact details. More information per faculty member is available in a downloadable file of their CV, but not displayed on-page. It should also be noted that the webpage does not seem to link each member of staff with the specific courses that they teach in the programme.

There is also information of a practical nature on issues such as infrastructure (maps, public transport, photo galleries of buildings and labs, links to rentals), pastoral services, accessibility services, and career/employability services.

The University's Policy for Quality Assurance is available online, mainly provided in downloadable copies of the Internal Evaluation Report from 2016/17 and Quality Targets for 2022.

## II. Analysis

The departmental website contains information that is accurate, relevant, easily accessible, and regularly updated. It is worth noting that the considerable emphasis on providing information of a more practical and/or pastoral nature is likely to be of significant value to current and prospective students.

However, while the website is by and large bilingual, there are several sections that are available only in the Greek version. This limitation, combined with the relative lack of information on the Erasmus programme in English, are likely to have a negative impact on the Department's ability for internationalization. The Greek version of the Erasmus already exists on the website, but this is of interest to current and prospective Greek students, not to potential incoming students from foreign universities.

The fact that key information about the new undergraduate programme is provided primarily in the form of downloadable files can be viewed as an additional limitation of the Department's website.

## III. Conclusions

The new study programme achieves *full* compliance with this principle.

### Panel Judgement

Principle 9: Public information concerning the new undergraduate programmes	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### Panel Recommendations

R9.1 The Department is encouraged to accelerate the effort to provide a fully bilingual version of the website. While most of the relevant information is available in both Greek and English, there remain several key sections that are available in Greek only.

R9.2 The Department should consider moving away from downloadable files towards displaying key information on-page. While downloadable files can still serve a purpose on the website, most of the key information about the new programme would be significantly more easily accessible if displayed on-page.

R9.3 The Department could consider creating a dedicated page for the Erasmus programme *in English*. Considering the historical lack of engagement with the Erasmus programme and the Department's stated objective of improving internationalization, a dedicated Erasmus page in English seems like the obvious first (and relatively simple) step.

## Principle 10: Periodic Internal Review of the New Study Programmes

Institutions and academic units should have in place an internal quality assurance system, for the audit and annual internal review of their new programmes, so as to achieve the objectives set for them, through monitoring and amendments, with a view to continuous improvement. Any actions taken in the above context, should be communicated to all parties concerned.

*Regular monitoring, review and revision of the new study programmes aim at maintaining the level of educational provision and creating a supportive and effective learning environment for students. The above comprise the evaluation of: the content of the programme in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up to date; the changing needs of society; the students' workload, progression and completion; the effectiveness of the procedures for the assessment of students; the students' expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme; the learning environment, support services, and their fitness for purpose for the programme. Programmes are reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders. The information collected is analysed and the programme is adapted to ensure that it is up-to-date.*

### **Relevant documentation**

- *Procedure for the re-evaluation, redefinition and updating of the curriculum*
- *Procedure for mitigating weaknesses and upgrading the structure of the UGP and the learning process*
- *Feedback processes on strategy implementation and quality targeting of the new UGP and relevant decision-making processes (students, external stakeholders)*
- *Results of the annual internal evaluation of the study programme by the QAU and the relevant minutes*

## **Study Programme Compliance**

### **I. Findings**

The periodic internal review of the new study programme is the joint responsibility of the University's unit for quality assurance (MODIP), the Department's internal evaluation committee (OMEA), and the Department's undergraduate studies committee (USC). The internal review is scheduled to take place annually (every April), and it considers a number of relevant principles and criteria such as student attainment and attendance, progression and completion statistics, staff and student feedback (including formal course evaluations), developing trends in comparable programmes in other universities, etc.

The internal review process requires the involvement of OMEA, MODIP, USC, current students, faculty members, and administrative staff. External stakeholders do not seem to actively participate in the process.

The two main outcomes of the internal review process are (a) the internal report and (b) the respective action plan. The outcomes of the process are recorded, communicated to the academic unit in the departmental assembly, submitted to the University's MODIP, and finally posted on the departmental website.



The Department completed an annual internal review for the academic year 2021/22. The action plan that resulted from the process includes a number of suggestions involving the provision of incentives to improve student performance, pursuing professional accreditations, strengthening research activity, and developing external collaborations. Particular emphasis was placed on the Department’s preference to relocate from Preveza to the main campus in Ioannina.

## II. Analysis

The institution has in place an appropriate process for the periodic internal review of the new study programme. Despite certain technological limitations (with different IT systems not communicating with one another), OMEA collects a significant volume of relevant data from different sources to assist the evaluation of the programme. This information is evaluated according to principles and criteria that are consistent with internationally recognized standards of good practice. Furthermore, the outcomes of the internal review process are communicated to all internal stakeholders and, importantly, made publicly available on the departmental website, achieving a substantial degree of transparency.

A point of concern is the lack of a specific process for monitoring the implementation of the action plan that results from the internal review process. Even though it is assumed that this task falls under the joint purview of the USC, OMEA, and MODIP, no formal process seems to exist when it comes to reflecting on the implementation of the action plan.

At the moment, it appears that the process is centred around OMEA and faculty members “might” contribute to collecting input on an ad hoc basis. One way to allow for the active involvement of every member of the teaching team would be for every course leader to produce their own internal evaluation report for their courses, with all these reports feeding into the internal evaluation report of the overall programme. In a similar spirit, all faculty members should have a formal forum that allows them to offer their views on programme evaluation *before* OMEA produces its final report.

The internal review process does not seem to involve external stakeholders in any obvious way. This is somewhat surprising given the Department’s stated objective of basing programme development on the continuously evolving needs of the industry and society.

## III. Conclusions

The new study programme achieves *substantial* compliance with this principle.

### Panel Judgement

Principle 10: Periodic internal review of the new study programmes	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	<b>X</b>
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

## **Panel Recommendations**

R10.1: The Department is encouraged to develop a more *structured* procedure of monitoring and evaluating the implementation of the action plan that results from the internal review process. This “closing-the-loop” procedure should be based on scheduled meetings and specific timeframes.

R10.2 The Department is encouraged to ensure that every faculty member is actively involved in the internal evaluation process.

R10.3 The Department could consider a more significant involvement of external stakeholders in the internal evaluation process. This involvement could range from a simple consultation on current trends and needs of industry to externals formally attending some of the scheduled meetings and providing input to the final report.

## **Principle 11: Regular External Evaluation and Accreditation of the New Undergraduate Programmes**

The new undergraduate study programmes should regularly undergo evaluation by panels of external experts set by HAHE, aiming at accreditation. The results of the external evaluation and accreditation are used for the continuous improvement of the Institutions, academic units and study programmes. The term of validity of the accreditation is determined by HAHE.

*HAHE is responsible for administrating the programme accreditation process which is realised as an external evaluation procedure and implemented by a panel of independent experts. HAHE grants accreditation of programmes, based on the Reports submitted by the panels, with a specific term of validity, following to which revision is required. The accreditation of the quality of the programmes acts as a means of verification of the compliance of the programme with the Standards, and as a catalyst for improvement, while opening new perspectives towards the international standing of the awarded degrees. Both academic units and institutions must consistently consider the conclusions and the recommendations submitted by the panels of experts for the continuous improvement of the programme.*

### **Relevant documentation**

- *Progress report on the results from the utilisation of the recommendations of the external evaluation of the Institution and of the IQAS Accreditation Report.*

### **Study Programme Compliance**

#### **I. Findings**

This is the first external evaluation of the new undergraduate study programme. Furthermore, the Department itself has not yet been the subject of an external evaluation. The Department was created in 2013 from the merger of the Department of Accounting and the Department of Finance and Auditing of the TEI of Epirus, with the new Department being introduced into the University of Ioannina in 2018.

During the panel's discussions with the Department, it was evident that all faculty members recognize the importance of the external review and its potential to contribute to the Department's improvement. It should also be noted that all faculty members actively engaged in the external review process and appeared eager to discuss potential ways to improve the study programme.

There was an IQAS accreditation of the University of Ioannina in 2018 which developed a set of recommendations to improve the educational provision of undergraduate programmes at the University. The University's MODIP accepted all the IQAS recommendations and developed an action plan to address them. A subsequent report in 2021 evaluated the progress that had been made up to that point in implementing the action plan. While the IQAS accreditation report and the resulting action plan refer to the University as a whole, they are still of significance to the Department of Accounting and Finance and the new undergraduate study programme.

## II. Analysis

The panel acknowledges the engagement of the faculty members with the evaluation process and their willingness to consider ways in which to further improve the Department's educational provision.

Due to the lack of a previous external review of the study programme, it is difficult for the Panel to comment on the Department's compliance with this principle with a high level of confidence. Nevertheless, the Panel notes the absence of information about how the Department has taken into consideration the recommendations of the IQAS 2018 report. The 2021 MODIP Progress Report is itself somewhat limited, discussing the progress achieved in only 6 out of the 30 IQAS recommendations.

## III. Conclusions

The new study programme achieves *substantial* compliance with this principle.

### Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 11: Regular external evaluation and accreditation of the new undergraduate programmes</b>	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	<b>X</b>
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### Panel Recommendations

**R11.1:** The Department is encouraged to formally consider the implications of the IQAS 2018 report on its educational provision in general and the new undergraduate study programme in particular. While some of the IQAS recommendations apply to the University level, others are actionable by the Department.

## **Principle 12: Monitoring the Transition from Previous Undergraduate Study Programmes to the New Ones**

**Institutions and academic units apply procedures for the transition from previously existing undergraduate study programmes to new ones, in order to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Standards.**

*Applies in cases where the department implements, in addition to the new UGPs, any pre-existing UGPs from departments of former Technological Educational Institutions (TEI) or from departments that were merged / renamed / abolished.*

*Institutions should implement procedures for the transition from former UGPs to new ones, in order to ensure their compliance with the requirements of the Standards. More specifically, the institution and the academic unit must have a) the necessary learning resources, b) appropriate teaching staff, c) structured curriculum (courses, ECTS, learning outcomes), d) study regulations, award of diploma and diploma supplement, and e) system of data collection and use, with particular reference to the data of the graduates of the pre-existing UGP. In this context, the Institutions and the academic units prepare a plan for the foreseen transition period of the existing UGP until its completion, the costs caused to the Institution by its operation as well as possible measures and proposals for its smooth delivery and termination. This planning includes data on the transition and subsequent progression of students in the respective new UGP of the academic unit, as well as the specific graduation forecast for students enrolled under the previous status.*

### **Relevant documentation**

- *The planning of the Institution for the foreseen transition period, the operating costs and the specific measures or proposals for the smooth implementation and completion of the programme*
- *The study regulations, template for the degree and the diploma supplement*
- *Report of Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) on the progress of the transition and the degree of completion of the programme. In the case of UGP of a former Technological Educational Institution (TEI), the report must include a specific reference to how the internship was implemented*

### **Study Programme Compliance**

#### **I. Findings**

This is a new programme therefore the panel had no basis to comment on the transition period or the progress of such transition.

The undergraduate programme under review is (partially) based on a pre-existing programme that had been offered by the TEI of Epirus.

The Department has made provisions so that students who had been registered in the TEI programme up until 2018/19 can continue their studies under the pre-existing programme structure in order to complete their studies.

Additionally, students from the TEI programme have been offered the opportunity to take a number of additional modules that would allow them to graduate from the new undergraduate programme offered by the Department. This process is strictly defined by law. The Department seems to satisfy these legal requirements with respect to students in transition from the previous TEI programme.

## II. Analysis

The Department allows students from the previous programme to upgrade to the actual programme. Some students have taken the challenge. The level of fresh comers in the new Department is clearly higher than the previous students but this also led to a decreasing number of new students.

The panel met one of these students during the meeting with the students. The process is smooth and well organized.

## III. Conclusions

This procedure will gradually end when all the students of the previous programme will either finish their studies or step to the actual programme. Since the new programme runs since 2020, this issue should come an end with the next few years.

### Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 12: Monitoring the transition from previous undergraduate study programmes to the new ones</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### Panel Recommendations

None.

## **PART C: CONCLUSIONS**

### **I. Features of Good Practice**

- The Department possesses good physical and IT infrastructures.
- The Department places strong emphasis on the provision of pastoral, accessibility and employability services.
- The programme follows the European standards of quality.

### **II. Areas of Weakness**

- Decreased attractiveness to new applicants.
- Very limited international exposure.
- Insufficient strategic planning. The main axis in the strategic planning of the Department is its relocation to the central campus of Ioannina.

### **III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions**

- Develop a multi-faceted strategy that includes not only the relocation of the Department to the main campus at Ioannina but also addresses the suitability of the programme to the needs of the development of the broader region and the rapidly changing labour market in the fields of accounting and finance.
- Focus on raising the Department's standing among similar departments in the country. This will help strengthen the attractiveness of the programme to new applicants.
- Consider ways of differentiating the programme from those offered by other universities. One approach could be an even greater emphasis on the technological orientation of the programme and its applied nature.
- Place additional emphasis on the international orientation of both the Department and the programme.

#### IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: **4, 7, 9 and 12.**

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11.**

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are: **None.**

The Principles where failure of compliance was identified are: **None.**

Overall Judgement	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	<b>X</b>
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	



## The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

**Name and Surname**

**Signature**

- 1. Professor Michel Dimou (Chair)**  
Université de Toulon, Toulon, France
- 2. Dr Nikolaos Voukelatos**  
University of Kent, United Kingdom
- 3. Professor Nicholas Vonortas**  
The George Washington University, Washington, United States of America
- 4. Mr. Stelios Mastorogiannakis**  
Economic Chamber of Greece, Athens, Greece
- 5. Mr. Alexandros Pappas**  
Student of Accounting and Finance, University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki, Greece