



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



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Accreditation Report
for the New Undergraduate Study Programme in
operation of:

Regional and Economic Development

Institution: Agricultural University of Athens

Date: 25 May 2024



Με τη συγχρηματοδότηση
της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης



Πρόγραμμα
Ανθρώπινο Δυναμικό και
Κοινωνική Συνοχή



Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the New Undergraduate Study Programme in operation of **Regional and Economic Development** of the **Agricultural University of Athens** 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 **Regional and Economic Development** of the **Agricultural University of Athens** comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

- 1. Emeritus Professor Michael S. Michael (Chair)**
University of Cyprus

- 2. Dr Ioannis Anagnostopoulos, Senior lecturer**
Royal Holloway, University of London, Egham, United Kingdom

- 3. Dr Kyriakos Neanidis, Reader in Macroeconomics**
University of Manchester, Manchester, United Kingdom

- 4. Mr. Ioannis Michiotis**
Economic Chamber of Greece, Athens, Greece

- 5. Mr. Panagiotis Panagiotidis, Student of Economics**
University of Thessaly, Volos, Greece

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

On Saturday, **May 18, 2024**, the EEAP was invited, via Zoom meeting, to attend HAHE's Director General, Dr. Christina Besta, on HAHE's mission, standards and guidelines of the accreditation process at 12:00am.

On **Monday, May 20, 2024**, at 16.00, the EEAP held a private debriefing meeting to discuss logistics in association with virtual visits and the allocation of various tasks.

On **Monday, May 20, 2024**, the EEAP participated in two teleconferences with:

The Head of the Department, MODIP, the Steering Committees/OMEA members. More specifically:

1. EEAP: Prof. Emmanuel Flemetakis, Vice Rector/President of MODIP, Associate Prof. Marina Selini Katsaiti, Head of the Department
2. EEAP: OMEA MEMBERS of the Department 1. Associate Prof. Marina Selini Katsaiti, Head of the Department, Undergraduate Program Coordinator, Student Advisor 2. Prof. Angeliki Menegaki, PhD Program Coordinator 3. Assistant Prof. Emilia Vlami, MA Program Coordinator, Textbook Coordinator 4. Assistant Prof. Dimitrios Tsiotas, Webpage Coordinator, Course Guide Coordinator MODIP MEMBERS of AUA 5. Prof. Emmanouil Flemetakis, Vice-Rector/ President of MODIP 6. MODIP Member Prof. Ioannis Papanikolaou, 7. Mrs. Alexandra Ntouka, MODIP Secretary

All of the above, kindly offered an overview of both PSPs (history, academic profile, current status, strengths, and possible areas of concern).

The EEAP met at the close of the review day to reflect on impressions of the first day and prepare for the second day of the on-line review.

On **Tuesday May 21, 2024**, the EEAP participated in seven teleconferences with:

1. Teaching staff of the Department: 1. Assistant Prof. Panagiotis Mitropoulos 2. Lecturer Spiros Alexiou, Final Examination Schedule Coordinator 3. Lecturer Anna Ftouli, Erasmus Coordinator 4. Lecturer Aikaterini Karpeta 5. Lecturer Spiros Ntourmas 6. Dr. Panagiotis Panagiotopoulos (time contract) 7. Dr. Andreas Gkouzos (time contract) 8. Dr. Anna Tzavali (time contract). They informed the EEAP about professional development opportunities, mobility, workload, student evaluations; competence and adequacy of the teaching staff to ensure learning outcomes; link between teaching & research; teaching staff's involvement in research, projects & research activities directly related to the programme; identify possible areas of weakness.
2. Ten current students of the Program. The EEAP Members discussed with the students openly and freely. They were informed about satisfaction from study experience, the adequacy of facilities, student input in quality assurance, and priority issues concerning student life and welfare.
3. The committee was offered an on-line tour of infrastructure and facilities such as classrooms, lecture halls, libraries, laboratories, and other facilities related to the program. The committee members did a virtual tour Discussion about the facilities presented in the video with the following staff members: Administrative staff members 1. Mrs. Roula Lytra, Senior Administrator 2. Mrs. Paraskevi (Vivian) Talamaga, Administrator Teaching staff members 3. Prof. Angeliki Menegaki, PhD Program

- Coordinator, ELKE Representative 4. Associate Prof. Marina Selini Katsaiti, Head of the Department, Undergraduate Program Coordinator, Student Advisor 5. Assistant Prof. Emilia Vlami, MA Program Coordinator, Textbook Coordinator 6. Assistant Prof. Dimitrios Tsiotas, Webpage Coordinator, Course Guide Coordinator 7. Assistant Prof. Panagiotis Mitropoulos 8. Lecturer Spiros Alexiou, Class schedule and Final Examination Schedule Coordinator 9. Dr. Anna Tzavali (time contract)
4. Ten social partners of the program. We discussed the relations of the Department with external stakeholders.
 5. Private debriefing meeting among the EEAP Members to primarily discuss findings up to that point and prepare an oral report.
 6. EEAP Meeting with OMEA & MODIP representatives: OMEA MEMBERS of the Department 1. Associate Prof. Marina Selini Katsaiti, Head of the Department, Undergraduate Program Coordinator, Student Advisor 2. Prof. Angeliki Menegaki, PhD Program Coordinator 3. Assistant Prof. Emilia Vlami, MA Program Coordinator, Textbook Coordinator 4. Assistant Prof. Dimitrios Tsiotas, Webpage Coordinator, Course Guide Coordinator, 5. MODIP MEMBERS & Staff of AUA Prof. Emmanouil Fletmetakis, Vice-Rector/ President of MODIP. 6. Prof. Ioannis Papanikolaou, MODIP Member 7. Mrs. Alexandra Ntouka, MODIP Secretary. Discuss on several points/findings which need further clarification
 7. Closure meeting with the Vice-Rector/President of MODIP, the Head of the Department, OMEA & MODIP EEAP, Vice-Rector, Head of the Department, OMEA & MODIP members, MODIP staff OMEA MEMBERS of the Department 1. Associate Prof. Marina Selini Katsaiti, Head of the Department, Undergraduate Program Coordinator, Student Advisor 2. Prof. Angeliki Menegaki, PhD Program Coordinator 3. Assistant Prof. Emilia Vlami, MA Program Coordinator, Textbook Coordinator 4. Assistant Prof. Dimitrios Tsiotas, Webpage Coordinator, Course Guide Coordinator MODIP MEMBERS & Staff of AUA 5. Prof. Emmanouil Fletmetakis, Vice-Rector/ President of MODIP 6. Prof. Ioannis Papanikolaou, MODIP Member 7. Mrs. Alexandra Ntouka, MODIP Secretary

From **May 22 to May 25, 2024**, the EEAP worked privately on drafting its Report.

The Agricultural University of Athens and the Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (HAHE) provided the External Evaluation and Accreditation Panel (EEAP) members two sets of documents. Specifically, HAHE provided the Quality indicators, the Accreditation guidelines and standards, the mapping grid assessment guide and the Report template. The University provided the Panel members a number of files on the programme's structure and internal quality assurance procedures. The evaluation procedure was well structured and comprehensive, thus enabling the EEAP members to form a good picture of the programme, the department and university, its present status as well as its future prospective.

III. New Undergraduate Study Programme in operation Profile

The Department of Regional and Economic Development (REGED) of the Agricultural University of Athens (AUA) was created in 2019 and is one of the four departments of the Faculty of Applied Economic and Social Sciences of the University. The first students joined the programme in the academic year 2019-2020. The Department is located in the city of Amfissa, Phocis.

The Department offers a bachelor's degree in Regional and Economic Development. The programme lasts for four years and is divided into eight semesters (September - January and February - June). Each semester consists of at least 13 teaching weeks and the workload is 30 ECTS. When the students attend successfully 240 ECTS, they are awarded a bachelor's degree. With this degree graduates can enlist in the Economic Chamber of Greece and the employment opportunities are considered good.

During their studies, students are required to attend courses, participation in laboratory exercises, and write and present various projects. As in all Greek Universities, the class attendance of the students is not mandatory.

At the time of the visit, the Department has 20 members of staff, of which 15 is teaching staff and five is administrative staff. From the 15-teaching staff, five members were employed on an annual contract. The number of admitted students in the academic year 2019-20 was 220. Due to minimum entry requirements set by the Ministry of Education, the number fell drastically in 2021-22 to 18 students while for the current academic year 40 students were enrolled in the programme.

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-centred 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 EEAP finds that the Department has been established in 2019 and at that time none of the documents pertaining to the strategic planning, feasibility and sustainability have been in place. Instead, these documents have been developed at a later date when the Department started the Accreditation process with HAHE.

Since then, all the required feasibility and sustainability studies have been developed, and currently are all in place and correspond to the expected level of provision.

II. Analysis

There is clear documentation that the new undergraduate programme is included in the internationally established scientific fields of Higher Education by UNESCO (ISCED 2013). The establishment of the new Department in 2019 has been accompanied by the Strategic Plan of the Institution which includes the proposed academic reconstruction in view of the planned operation of the new undergraduate study programme.

There exists a SWOT analysis at both the Institutional and Departmental levels that considers the potential benefits, limitations, opportunities and risks accruing from the delivery of the new undergraduate programme. In addition, the feasibility and sustainability study for the new undergraduate programme sufficiently addresses the related objectives, input and expected output. This includes the infrastructure, human resources, funding perspective, services, and all other available resources that contribute to the smooth functioning of the programme.

Further, there is detailed information in the form of a four-year business plan of the Department that addresses issues of structure, operation, and activities, including the provision of critical figures for the new undergraduate programme.

There exists a detailed description of the structure of studies that includes the organisation of studies by year and topic, the modes of teaching and learning, including the intended learning outcomes and professional rights awarded. All this is also publicly available online.

The four-year plan of the Department includes a breakdown of the expected number of students per year, rising every year by about 20 to reach the maximum of 80 by 2025. This comes across as a sustainable target so long as it is matched by an equitable increase in academic staff. There is not an option of students transferring from or to other departments.

As it concerns postgraduate studies and research, there is not currently a postgraduate programme of study. However, there exists a doctoral programme with a robust number of students. It is also notable that the academic staff is research active, although the research output is unevenly distributed, and the quality of the journal outlets could be further improved.

III. Conclusions

Overall, the Department is in good state when it comes to having developed an appropriate strategy for the establishment and operation of the undergraduate study programme.

Panel Judgement

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

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

Panel Recommendations

R1.1 – In terms of feasibility and sustainability, it is advisable that the University and the Department increase their efforts to attract more and better-quality students. An important criterion for achieving this objective appears to be the provision of meal and subsistence plans for students, which should be prioritized as a matter of urgency via funding by the University.

R1.2 – In terms of quality teaching provision, the University should give priority to an increasing number of academic staff that moves in tandem with student intake. The new staff additions should meet the minimum research requirements in line with international standards.

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

The EEAP finds that the Department has in place an accredited Internal Quality Assurance System and formulates and applies a Quality Assurance Policy (QAP). This Policy is in line with the standards set by the University in its own QAP, which provides recommendations for improvement to the Department. The Department's QAP includes a commitment to satisfy all applicable requirements to the delivery of the undergraduate programme and a commitment to its continuous development and improvement. Importantly, the QAP is publicly available via the Department's website.

II. Analysis

The QAP represents a core document in the functioning of the Department and is clearly communicated to all involved parties. It documents a set of goals that are specific, measurable, achievable and relevant in respect of teaching methods and delivery, student satisfaction and learning outcomes.

The Department commits itself to put into practice quality procedures that demonstrate all above items (a)-(i). These are clearly documented in the QAP and there is an ongoing process of revision.

However, the Department currently lacks a process for reporting on progress made based on recommendations by the University's QAP or other involved parties. This is necessary to keep track of required improvements, evaluate the outcomes, and reflect on these outcomes and adjust the set objectives.

III. Conclusions

The Panel acknowledges the determination of the Department to ensuring an appropriate QAP that it follows upon and revises accordingly. But it also notes the absence of a process that would assist in recording and following up on proposed actions. These and some other observations, lead the EEAP to make recommendations below.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R2.1 – There should be a clear mechanism based on which the Department records *how* it has followed up on recommendations made by the University’s QAP or other stakeholders. This will also allow the Department to monitor its own progress and development towards recorded goals.

R2.2 – The Department suffers from an inferior quality infrastructure specific to internet access and telecommunication lines. This structural problem needs to be addressed quickly because it interferes with the strategic objective number 7 of the Department as indicated in the QAP: “Suitability and adequacy of infrastructure and equipment for education and research.” The EEAP recommends the involvement of the University, given that in its own QAP it states that it is responsible for supporting its Departments with sufficient funds for them to operate smoothly.

R2.3 – The recent creation of the Department has been supported with new permanent academic posts. This is very welcome but needs to be further re-enforced with additional academic posts that increase in line with the expected increase in student numbers. This is necessary not only for allocating a reasonable teaching load to staff and for improving the student experience, but also for sustaining the production of high-quality research, listed as strategic objective number 2 in the QAP. Specific to the last point, the Panel recommends that the University supports with additional funds the annual budget of the Department for research purposes (i.e., conduct of research, access to data, submission to journals, conference participation, etc). The current state of affairs is unsustainable and we recommend the University to follow up on the request for funds as recorded in the “Strategic plan of the Department for the years 2022-2025”.

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 EEAP finds that the undergraduate study programme is designed based on appropriate standards sufficient to serve its “dual identity” of Regional and Economic Development. The programme reflects common practices in the design of undergraduate study programmes in Economics and Regional Science around the world, including the development of digital skills for the students based on popular software programmes. Therefore, the programme curriculum is comparable to universally accepted standards in the two disciplines.

The structure of the undergraduate programme is rational and clearly articulated in the documentation, and the Student Guide represents a complete, concise and appropriate information tool for current and prospective students.

The documentation describes the procedure in place for periodic revisions of the programme curriculum, but it is not very clear how those revisions have been undertaken—a point emphasised further in Principle 10 below. Although the documentation claims that the annual monitoring and review of the programme includes the input of students and external stakeholders, there is no process that documents this input and the way it feeds into curriculum revisions.

II. Analysis

The completion of the undergraduate programme involves 48 courses (22 in Economics, 16 in Regional Science, 6 in digital skills, and 1 in general knowledge) for a total of 240 ECTS.

The undergraduate programme design is backed up by clear objectives, the expected learning outcomes, and the intended professional qualifications, including how these are achievable. Although the programme is very young, there is emerging evidence that students’ progress smoothly across the years of study using the services offered by the academic advisor, they cope well with the workload, and the teaching delivered by staff is linked to (recent) research.

The design of the programme corresponds to a very-well defined written process that describes the involved participants, information sources, and the approval committees. However, in practice there seems to be a gap in that undertaken programme revisions do not detail whether/how student input has been implemented in the process, and, importantly, there does not appear to be registered feedback from external stakeholders. The EEAP dwells further on this matter in Principle 10, so please look there for more details and recommendations.

A further aspect that is currently lacking from the programme design is a mechanism that links students and graduates to the labour market. Ideally this would involve a Careers Service to offer opportunities for work experience during studies (i.e., summer internships) and after graduation.

III. Conclusions

The EEAP acknowledges that the Department has processes in place for designing and approving its undergraduate programme of study. However, there is less evidence about how students and stakeholders feed their input in the revision procedure. The Department needs to document the revision procedure more clearly. Better links with stakeholders will also benefit the placement of students and graduates in the local labour market. Based on these observations, the EEAP makes some recommendations below.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R3.1 – Engage with the local and regional economy to create a two-way channel of information flow that informs the Department of the type of employees demanded by employers and of the work opportunities available for graduates. The former information will allow the Department to revise its programme by taking on board the needs of the employers, while the latter information will help match graduates to job placements.

R3.2 – Currently, staff members teach 5 hours per course unit per teaching week. This comes across as a lot when compared to international standards. The EEAP recommends reducing the teaching hours to a total of 3-4 hours per unit per teaching week to be in line with general convention.

R3.3 – The undergraduate programme does not currently have a dissertation in its curriculum. The EEAP recommends a dissertation to be incorporated into the programme curriculum as elective, in the first stage, and subsequently be made compulsory, with an appropriate number of ECTS. To minimize resource implications, the dissertation could replace some of the existing optional units on offer in years 3 or 4. This recommendation will help students further develop valuable skills (e.g., writing, presentation, and quantitative for applied projects), which are highly valued by employers and higher education institutions, the latter for students that seek to pursue further studies.

R3.4 – During the meetings it was mentioned that the temporary contract-based staff are approved with substantial delay in the academic year, well after the first semester has started, i.e., late October. This creates unnecessary problems in the allocation of teaching load and the delivery of teaching and hurts the student experience. The EEAP recommends the resolution of this issue at the earliest possible, way before the start of the academic year.

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-centred 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

The programme implements published regulations to ensure student-centred learning in teaching and student assessment. Initially, regulations are applied to ensure that students are treated equally. Beyond this, regulations are implemented to ensure the quality of the programme and student assessment. Examples of such regulations include the academic advisor and the student advocate.

The regulations, although particularly important, are not the only measures taken by the programme administration to provide the necessary support to students. Various teaching methods are applied to help students understand and meet the programme's requirements.

Additionally, the criteria for evaluating student performance are published and well-defined, and accessible to students through the programme's website. Furthermore, there are opportunities for student participation in workshops, conferences, and competitions.

II. Analysis

The programme's approach, as described, emphasizes fairness, quality, and comprehensive support for students through several key strategies.

By implementing published regulations, it ensures equal treatment for all students, creating a foundation of fairness and consistency that is essential for a positive learning environment. These regulations serve as the backbone of the department's commitment to equitable education, ensuring that no student is disadvantaged and that all have the same opportunities to succeed.

Furthermore, the Department establishes specific roles, such as the academic advisor and the student advocate, which are crucial in maintaining the quality of the programme and providing individualised support to students. The academic advisor helps guide students through their academic journey, offering advice and assistance tailored to their unique needs, while the student advocate ensures that students' voices are heard and their concerns addressed, promoting a supportive and responsive educational atmosphere.

The programme's commitment to diverse teaching methods reflects its adaptive approach to education, recognizing that students have different learning styles and needs. By employing various instructional strategies, the Department helps students better understand course material and meet programme requirements effectively, enhancing overall learning outcomes. This flexibility in teaching not only caters to the diverse student body but also encourages innovative and effective pedagogical practices. Transparency is another cornerstone of the Department's philosophy, achieved through the publication of well-defined criteria for evaluating student performance. By making these criteria accessible through the website, the Department fosters an environment of trust and clarity, where students are fully aware of what is expected of them and can prepare accordingly.

Additionally, the programme emphasizes the importance of active student engagement and professional development by offering numerous opportunities for participation in workshops, conferences, and competitions. These activities not only enhance students' academic and practical skills but also provide valuable networking opportunities and exposure to real-world challenges and industry standards. Such experiences are integral to students' growth, preparing them for future careers and fostering a sense of community and collaboration. Overall, the Department's multifaceted approach to education—balancing strict adherence to regulations with flexible teaching methods, transparent evaluation processes, and ample opportunities for professional engagement—demonstrates a holistic commitment to academic excellence and comprehensive student development. This strategy ensures that students are not only well-educated but also well-prepared to succeed in their future endeavours.

III. Conclusions

The Department's multifaceted approach to education underscores its commitment to fostering an equitable, high-quality, and supportive learning environment. By implementing published regulations, it ensures fairness and consistency in the treatment of all students. The

roles of the academic advisor and student advocate are pivotal in maintaining programme quality and providing personalised support, addressing individual student needs and concerns. The use of diverse teaching methods caters to different learning styles, enhancing student comprehension and success. Transparency in evaluation processes, facilitated by accessible performance criteria, builds trust and clarity between students and the administration. Additionally, the emphasis on active student engagement through workshops, conferences, and competitions promotes professional development and practical experience. Overall, the Department's comprehensive strategy not only aims for academic excellence but also prepares students for future success, demonstrating a holistic dedication to their growth and development.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R4.1 – The EEAP recommends that students get exposed to individual and group assignments in more course units during their studies. The presentations will help develop necessary skills and enhance the ability to communicate effectively, both verbally and non-verbally, which is highly prized by employers.

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

Students are joining the programme after taking the entrance examinations which are organized by the Ministry of Education of the Greek State. In the first year of the programme, 2019-20, 220 students were admitted. In academic year 2021-22, however, only 18 students joined the programme. In the last academic year 2023-24 the number has increased to 40 students. At the start of each academic year, the Department is organizing a welcome meeting for the Incoming students, where they receive all the necessary information. They receive

information about the programme structure, courses, timetable, the facilities, and tools available in the Department and about their rights and obligations. The Department has adopted an advisor process where each student can receive academic advice from faculty members throughout their studies. Upon graduation, graduates receive a Diploma Supplement, containing detail information about their studies. Students can receive scholarships through the Greek State Scholarship Foundation.

Students receive information regarding the Erasmus exchange programme and the opportunities for internships with Erasmus+, through the webpage of the University, with emails and through personal meetings.

II. Analysis

The students are joining the programme after taking successfully the entrance examinations, which are organized by the Greek State. Students find all necessary information about their study programme structure, teaching staff, timetables, studies rules and regulations, and procedures on the internet site of the Department. Students have online access to all information concerning their progress towards the degree, e.g., grades for exams, projects and courses. The Department fully implements the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) for its programme. The total load is 240 ECTS units, divided equally in eight semesters. The website of the Department contains a detailed description of the courses. Students can participate in the ERASMUS and ERASMUS+ exchange programme. From the information provided to EEAP, however, no student has participated in either programme.

III. Conclusions

The **Department of Regional and Economic Development** has developed and apply excellent published rules and regulations that cover all aspects and phases of its undergraduate study programme.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R5.1 – The Department should increase its effort in convincing its students to participate in the ERASMUS exchange programmes.

R5.2 – Possibly, to consider the introduction of credit-based internships (e.g., 3-6 credits) during the summer period.

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

For the academic year 2023-24, The Department of Regional and Economic Development relies on 15 teaching staff members to deliver all the courses needed for its students to graduate. The teaching staff consists of one Full professor, two Associate Professors, 3 Assistant Professors, four Lecturers and five members with annual contracts. Two new Assistant Professors are expected to join the Department from the next academic year.

There is a set of processes and procedures that follow the relevant Ministry regulations standards on recruitment of teaching staff, which are observed. Processes for staff assessment are transparent and available to the faculty. The overall course delivery performance adequacy of the teaching staff is followed regularly with student surveys for each course. The teaching loads for the faculty is within the rules of the University. The administration load, however, is quite heavy, especially for the tenured faculty.

The research activity of the 10 members of the Department in the last few years is the following. In 2022 faculty members of the Department have published 24 articles while in 2023

the number has increased to 38. While the number of publications is quite good, this is unevenly distributed among faculty members, some with very high number and some with very low. They also have participated in three research programmes. Currently, however, no faculty member participates in a research programme.

II. Analysis

The research activity of the members of the Department is uneven. Some members have very high research activity while others have very low. While the number of publications in academic journals is quite high, a good number of them appears in low impact journals. The participation in research projects is quite low and currently is zero. The international mobility of the Department faculty members and their participation in international conferences is not clearly mentioned but seems rather low. One would expect a higher in-coming and out-going mobility of teaching staff, especially within Europe.

III. Conclusions

The Department members are quite active, but their research activities are uneven. It is important that all teaching staff are research active. Their participation in research programmes is quite low.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R6.1 – Raise the international mobility and the participation of faculty in international conferences.

R6.2 – The Department and the University should increase funding for the Faculty research activities, especially for untenured faculty.

R6.3 – Intensify efforts to acquire funded research projects.

R6.4 – The Department research strategy for faculty should be to gradually increase the number of publications in higher impact academic journals.

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 programme has a short history, due to the short time that has elapsed since its establishment. In this short period some steps have been done to facilitate the needs of the students, but there is room for improvement.

Firstly, the programme's facilities, are in an excellent condition and very well maintained. There are some classrooms that can facilitate a small student population and some classrooms that can facilitate approximately 80 students.

Also, in the facilities of the programme, there is a small library (working as a branch of the main University library) that can provide to the students the necessary books and magazines. In the library, there is a study room with computers with access to the Internet that can be used from the students.

Furthermore, there is the website of the programme that provides the students with useful information, and links to useful services, such as e-class, webmail, and e-student. As noted, e-class is very updated and gives access to students to the material used in the classroom.

II. Analysis

Although, there are several advantages, there are some very strong disadvantages, such as:

- a. Lack of a stable, wired and unlimited internet connection.

This lack of stable internet connection can have a serious impact in the support of the students. As students are receiving presentations during classes, and use e-learning tools, the difficulty of connecting to the Internet can limit their access to the learning material. Also, the connection problem, as presented, has a serious impact on administrative services, which deteriorates the level of the service that students receive.

- b. Lack of phone lines and having in use outdated ways of communication.

The use of only one phone line for the whole programme's facilities (including administrative services, the library and the professors), combined with the lack of a stable internet connection, hampers the level of communication between students and staff.

- c. Misleading, missing and/or outdated published information on the website, and lack of student welfare facilities.

It was observed that the published information on the website of the programme is somewhat outdated, and, in some points, it could also be received as misleading. For example, there is no reference in the fact that there is no student meal plan on the campus located in Amfissa. Also, there is no reference on the webpage that there is no student housing in the student campus.

However, the webpage includes references on the current legislation, regarding the factors and the conditions that a student should meet to have the right of free meal plans, and there is a link in order to apply for such a (non-existent) provision.

III. Conclusions

While the programme has established a solid foundation with well-maintained facilities and a supportive online platform, critical improvements are necessary in internet infrastructure, communication systems, student welfare and accurate dissemination of information. Addressing these issues is essential for enhancing the overall student experience and operational efficiency.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R7.1 – Install a better internet connection (optic fibre or satellite internet), to increase the quality of the provided services.

R7.2 – Update the website with information related to the current state regarding student welfare. It would help to include a feedback mechanism for reporting outdated or incorrect online information. This applies to both the Greek and English website versions.

R7.3 – As indicated before, the EEAP recommends the immediate resolution on matters regarding student welfare services, especially the meal plans and student housing.

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 processes regarding data of interest that are collected on an ongoing basis to serve its operational needs through the University's information system. This data includes student questionnaires, completion of studies and many other data. Student evaluations of individual courses are conducted at the end of every semester. The assessment of the EEAP includes:

- information related to the Programme of Studies,
- learning outcomes,
- teaching resources and material,
- faculty member performance,
- any other information related to the Undergraduate Programme.

II. Analysis

The Department processes data on an on-going basis to serve its operational needs through the university's information system. The evaluation results and student remarks are examined by the OMEA and MODIP, summarized, and then submitted to the Department Chair who examines the results and, if needed, may raise individual issues with the teaching staff and take corrective action. Associated KPI's are updated and follow up on the implementation of results.

III. Conclusions

The EEAP observed that the Department has an adequate data collection mechanism and suitable information processing capability to generate a variety of reports to assess and monitor the results to implement its functions and policies in accordance with the requirements of the Quality Assurance framework.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R8.1 – The EEAP recommends that the Department initiates a data collection process for tracking the careers of alumni. Also to use alumni to create network opportunities for current students and offer feedback to further improve and enhance the undergraduate programme of studies.

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 Department has expended considerable effort in designing its website incorporating extensive and useful information including its mission, academic personnel profiles and functions and student services.

II. Analysis

The website is available in English in all sub-links. The OMEA and the Secretariat of the Department are tasked with controlling the content of the website, for each semester and examination period. The Department's website serves a dual role as an information tool and as an access portal to applications such as e-Class. The web application allows students to search for information about courses which are offered in the curriculum, instructor assignment to classes, a variety of course related issues, access grades for courses in which they have been enrolled and obtain a variety of other documents related to their academic endeavours. It also serves as a tool for electronic registration for courses each semester. The access to this application is simple, by using username and password, ensuring confidentiality.

III. Conclusions

The Panel thinks that the website is user-friendly, informative, well designed and maintained.

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 EEAP recommends the regular update of the website in both languages—especially the English version would be helpful for its external valuation and accessibility to international markets.

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

Programme revision practices are (as perhaps expected) not evident before the implementation of formal Internal Evaluation processes. The EEAP established the presence of a Programme Committee and study programme revisions implemented in 2023 based on the evidence handed to us. It is not exactly clear if, when and most importantly *how* the Department has undertaken revisions of its curriculum. For example, the programme seems to fit student preferences and labour market needs, but it is not clear whether this was the result of Internal Evaluation and programme reviews with stakeholders, or a simple decision taken by MODIP on its own.

Part of the monitoring and review of study programmes is structured along a questionnaire which serves as the basis for the Internal Evaluation process. The questionnaire indicates that the monitoring and review process meets the student side of the quality assurance standards to support the level of educational provision and effective learning.

During the EEAP visit, it was evident that the faculty members are aware of the importance of the Internal Evaluation and its contribution to improvement, and that they are committed to the mandated follow-up actions.

II. Analysis

The Department should ideally establish and institutionalize the informational presence of the programme committee and study programme revisions implemented. The EEAP understands that this process is currently taking place in conjunction with several internal units where the internal evaluation process is conducted by the Institution's Quality Assurance Unit (QAU), the Unit's Internal Evaluation Group (IEG) and the Head of the Unit.

There is no internal evaluation procedure in the Department that takes place annually for a holistic review of the programme. In the EEAP discussions with the stakeholders, this procedure was outlined as conducted by the Quality Assurance Unit in the Department and shared with the academic members and MODIP.

Since the inception of the programme, there has been no apparent interaction between the Department and the external stakeholders to provide feedback for use in the internal evaluation of the programme.

The internal evaluation process has not been conducted properly. It appears that the student evaluation process is the sole factor that drives the internal evaluation of the programme. The procedure should rather ideally track the requirements for the programme accreditation.

The EEAP was indeed provided with a version of the Internal Evaluation report. Upon closer inspection of the document, it was noted that it was mostly a description of the Internal Evaluation process, not properly documented and not addressing issues such as a description of the findings, remedial actions, and dissemination of the results to the academic community.

Typically, an internal Evaluation consists of:

- (i) Internal stakeholders: teaching staff, the quality committee, the student-staff consultative committee, the student voice (other than student questionnaires), student statistics as well as 1-to-1 meetings. This is just an example of a variety of mechanisms involved - including but not limited to - supporting documentary evidence that leads in principle to problem solution.
- (ii) External stakeholders: professionals, businesses, academic external examiners, chamber of commerce representatives, etc. Usually, the external team members are appointed in the same context as External Examiners.

As such an Internal Evaluation brings together all relevant PSRBs (Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies) in order to strengthen the quality and the currency of the curriculum and lead to programme improvements. It is not clear from reviewing this document how: (i) this procedure is affected, (ii) it is documented, and (iii) the feedback mechanism is utilised for programme improvements ensuring quality improvements.

III. Conclusions

The Department needs to document the procedure more clearly for the self-assessment of its programme. The annual Internal Evaluation report needs to be thoroughly documented and be the basis of consultation and revisions of the programme. The findings and the provided recommendations are in the spirit of collegiality and good intentions to assist in further improvement and to encapsulate aspects of those provided earlier.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R10.1 – Create a standardized Internal Evaluation Template, (perhaps as the one suggested by ETHAAE, though not mandatory), see: [2498-Ypodeigma_ekthesis_esoterikis_aksiologisis2011.doc](#), section 3.1, and use it in conjunction with the institutional Quality Manual (see for example [https://www.aueb.gr/sites/default/files/ΕΣΔΠ-ΟΠΑ-VER3\(2022](https://www.aueb.gr/sites/default/files/ΕΣΔΠ-ΟΠΑ-VER3(2022), Διαργασία 4,) to conduct the Internal Evaluation process of the UGP. Include, track, and document all issues of interest relative to the UGP. Utilize the appropriate forms provided at the end of the Quality Manual (Appendices/forms) to document your findings which will be communicated to the academic community. This model (including adopted appropriate tables in the template and forms in the manual) can then be used for all subsequent Internal Annual Evaluations of the UGP to tremendously facilitate the process.

R10.2 – In relation to follow-up actions from this and future Internal Evaluations of the UGP, it is strongly encouraged that the Department focuses its endeavours on actions that are directly related to the points raised in each review.

R10.3 – In relation to initiating and implementing follow-up actions from this and future reviews, it is strongly encouraged to document the participation of all relevant stakeholders (i.e., not only staff members).

R10.4 – In relation to future reviews as well as follow-up actions from this and future Internal Evaluations of the UGP, to the extent possible, it is encouraged that the stakeholders involved exhibit substantial variation in the level of their affiliation with the Department in terms of education and/or employment history within the Department.

R10.5 – The possibility of creating an Advisory Board, consisting of prominent individuals and/or distinguished professionals, businesses, and topical authorities. The Department will receive from this council advisory guidance for further improvement of the programme.

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 USP of the Department of Regional and Economic Development based in Amphisa.

The Department in its proposal (application) for accreditation submitted to the HAHE describes the general procedure that leads to a proposal of external evaluation, but there is no mention of how the unit plans to implement the recommendations and the associated improvement of any future external evaluation.

There is no mention of the extent of the involvement of the stakeholders regarding the results and the follow up actions of the external evaluation.

II. Analysis

The EEAP is not aware of any previous external evaluation of the present UPS. However, there has been an external evaluation of the predecessor institution, and the Department is aware of the recommendations. Furthermore, they identified some recommendations that apply to the new UPS as well.

However, the EEAP did not receive any information in the form of a progress report and is not able to assess whether any previous recommendations were properly addressed.

III. Conclusions

There is no previous external evaluation of the new Department or the new undergraduate study programme. As expected, there is no evidence on how the department plans to implement the current evaluation or any future recommendation of an external evaluation process.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R11.1 – The Department must develop an approach of considering and acting on the suggestions of the external evaluation process.

R11.2 – It is recommended that the Progress Report associated with any future External Evaluation of the Programme should be in the suggested standardized tabular form which for every recommendation under consideration displays:

- The description of the recommendation
- Anticipated results
- Actions (to undertake to accomplish the anticipated results)
- Responsibilities (individuals responsible for each action)
- Timetable for anticipated completion
- Resources required (staff, financing, other)

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*
- *Name list of teaching staff, status, subject and the course they teach / examine*
- *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

The Department offers the necessary course units and examination arrangements to former TEI students for their successful graduation from the past programme of undergraduate studies. In principle, this process will end on 31 August 2024.

II. Analysis

The Department implemented procedures for the transition from the former undergraduate programme to the new one in order to ensure their compliance with the requirements of the Standards.

III. Conclusions

The Department has successfully prepared and implemented a plan for the transition period of the former TEI undergraduate programme until its completion in the current academic year.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Not applicable.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

- The documentation associated with the QAP is of high standard.
- Teaching and administrative staff is extremely supportive to the students' needs.
- Students express high levels of satisfaction with the academic and administrative staff.
- The building infrastructure is excellent and provides to the programme all expected facilities.
- There exists a low student/faculty ratio.

II. Areas of Weakness

- There is limited involvement of academic staff in research programmes and limited mobility in the context of Erasmus+ as well as conferences' participation.
- Permanent staff is short in numbers; thus, the programme highly depends on staff with yearly contracts.
- There exists limited funding for staff participation in conferences and for research submission fees.
- Weak internet and Wi-Fi infrastructure.
- Limited documentation of internal findings and response to the internal evaluation process.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- Enhance Erasmus and Erasmus + participation.
- Establish an Advisory Board.
- Increase the Department's cooperation with local stakeholders.
- Advertise the Department's programme in order to attract more and higher quality students.
- Clearly document the internal evaluation process and communicate the findings and corrective actions.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: **1, 4, 5, 8, 9, 11, and 12.**

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **2, 3, 6, and 7.**

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are: **10.**

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

Overall Judgement	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname

Signature

- 1. Emeritus Professor Michael S. Michael (Chair)**
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- 2. Dr Ioannis Anagnostopoulos, Senior lecturer**
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- 3. Dr Kyriakos Neanidis, Reader in Macroeconomics**
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- 4. Mr. Ioannis Michiotis**
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- 5. Mr. Panagiotis Panagiotidis, Student of Economics**
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