



**ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ**  
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



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

**Economic Sciences**

**Institution: International Hellenic University**

**Date: 6 December 2022**



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 **Economic Sciences** of the **International Hellenic University** for the purposes of granting accreditation.

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

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

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

- 1. Professor Fragkiskos Filippaios (Chair)**  
University of East Anglia, United Kingdom
- 2. Professor Michel Dimou**  
Université du Sud Toulon-Var, France
- 3. Professor Nicholas Vonortas**  
The George Washington University, United States of America
- 4. Mr Stelios Mastrogiannakis**  
Member of the Economic Chamber of Greece
- 5. Mr Athanasios Vasilaridis**  
Student in the Department of Economics, University of Western Macedonia, Greece

## **Review Procedure and Documentation**

The visit to the Department of Economic Sciences took place on the 28<sup>th</sup> and 29<sup>th</sup> of November 2022. The meetings took place between 4:00 PM (Athens time) and 9:30 PM (Athens time) to manage the time differences between the External Evaluation and Accreditation Panel (EEAP) members (Greece, France, United Kingdom and United States of America) and the International Hellenic University (IHU). All the meetings took place by teleconference using Zoom. From a technical point of view, everything worked well, and all the attendees could participate in the discussions without interruption.

On Monday 28 November, in the afternoon, the EEAP had a preliminary private meeting to discuss the documentation received and any initial observations regarding the accreditation process. A set of questions was drafted guiding the key meetings with IHU, teaching staff, students, and external stakeholders. In the evening, the EEAP had its first meeting with the Vice-Rector and President of MODIP, Professor Ms K Makridou and the Head of the Department of Economic Sciences, Professor Mr G Magoulios. The Panel was briefed on the IHU's structure, organization, and goals as well as the undergraduate programme of Economic Sciences structure and quality assurance processes. The meeting was followed by a presentation of the programme quality assurance processes by members of the OMEA and MODIP. During the meeting, a presentation was delivered to the EEAP providing information on the curriculum, students, teaching methods, and research activities.

On Tuesday 29 November, in the afternoon, the EEAP met with several of the programme's teaching staff and covered various teaching and research issues as well as other issues and on-goings of the programme. The session was followed by one with students, without the presence of programme representatives. Students revealed their experiences and the discussion with the EEAP was very informative. The students were open and frank about their experiences and views, and overall, positive. Most students were registered in the UG of Economic Sciences, while one student was a transfer from the old programme in Accounting and Finance. The EEAP did not have the opportunity to meet with graduates and alumni as the first cohort of students is expected to graduate in 2023.

The meeting with students was followed by a virtual University tour in which the EEAP also met representatives of the professional services and technical staff. The University provided a video allowing a virtual visit to the infrastructure such as classrooms, lecture halls, the computer labs, staff offices, the library and meeting rooms. Overall, the EEAP's view of the

resources available to the IHU students was positive. Next, the EEAP had its final meeting with stakeholders and social partners. The group was relatively small, with only three external stakeholders present. They provided valuable insights and offered their honest views on the programme and the department. The common view for the IHU and of the programme under accreditation was favourable but they also expressed their interest in strengthening the collaboration further.

Later in the same day, the EEAP members met again with the IHU senior staff, MODIP and OMEA members, to provide preliminary feedback on the accreditation visit findings.

All meetings with teaching, technical and administrative staff, undergraduate students, and external stakeholders were very useful and informative. They were conducted in a very sincere and constructive manner, and all EEAP questions were answered sincerely and without avoiding any issues. All attendees were very helpful and understood and accepted the requirements, principles, and objectives of the external accreditation process.

The EEAP wishes to raise three points regarding the timing of the accreditation visit:

- The EEAP recommends that accreditation visits for new programmes are scheduled after the graduation of the first cohort of students. This will offer additional information on student experience and engagement with alumni. It will also ensure that data on students' employability reflect the graduates of the new programme. This will ensure that the next EEAP will be able to offer a complete evaluation of compliance with Principle 10.
- There was a significant delay between the submission of the accreditation folder (November 2021) and the EEAP visit (December 2022). The material submitted does not fully reflect recent developments in the department and the programme. We recommend that in similar cases the department is permitted to update the material submitted with any recent development in the form of an additional appendix.
- The EEAP recommends that an external evaluation visit focusing on the department and the programmes takes place before an accreditation visit. The most recent evaluation review was in 2013 and covered the Technological Education Institute (TEI). As such the context of that evaluation visit first was very different from the current one. The EEAP had difficulties in offering a full evaluation on compliance with Principle 11 as the context had changed significantly.

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

The Department of Economic Sciences was established in 2019 as a transformation of the pre-existing Department of Accounting and Finance. The department employs nine permanent teaching staff covering some but not all key areas of economic sciences. All permanent teaching staff are research active but with rather limited research activities regarding outputs, income generation and knowledge exchange. The research activity is currently hindered by the high student-staff ratio and the heavy administrative load. The department delivers concurrently two very different programmes, both very demanding in terms of student numbers. The old TEI programme of Accounting and Finance has approximately 2,500 students registered while the new programme in Economic Sciences has approximately 900 students registered. This creates a very high student-staff ratio that underpins a number of issues identified in the report.

The undergraduate programme in Economic Sciences is delivered over 8 terms (4 years). There are 6 courses and overall, 30 ECTS per term leading to 240 ECTS overall. From the 4<sup>th</sup> term onwards, students can select one optional course per term. There is a rather extensive list of optional courses for the size of the department but the way these are offered (only specific courses each term) constraints significantly the student choice. To graduate, students must complete 45 courses while a voluntary Practical Training, of two months duration typically over the summer, is offered after the 6<sup>th</sup> term of their studies and can substitute one course at the 8<sup>th</sup> term. The curriculum mirrors at a significant degree the equivalent programmes offered by other Economic Sciences departments in Greece and does not have many elements of differentiation. Teaching methods include face-to-face delivery and video conferencing (specially to cater for teaching during Covid19 lockdown periods). All learning material required for the courses is available to the students through a virtual learning environment (e-class).

The Department has currently 3246 registered undergraduate students (828 are registered for the programme under accreditation while the remaining 2418 are registered in the previously offered programme). The Department also offers a Masters and a Doctoral Programme.

Graduates of the programme can become members of the Economic Chamber of Greece and can be employed in a variety of roles. While statistics for employability for the programme under accreditation are not yet available (first cohort will graduate in 2023), statistics for the programme's predecessor indicate a good employability rate. The Department is conducting

an annual survey on graduate destinations and employability. The EEAP identified this survey as a possible area of best practice.

The Department is based in the city of Serres and has access to facilities of over 250 acres that include lecture halls, seminar rooms, offices, library, and laboratories. There are 7 fully equipped computer laboratories with 163 PCs.

## 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**

### Findings

The department does not have a clearly articulated mission. A mission statement should clearly identify the key stakeholders (students, teaching staff and professional services, other external stakeholders) and define ways through which the department serves them. It should be distinct from mission statements of other domestic or international departments and highlight the strengths of the department and the programme. The mission focuses on offering education through appropriate teaching and learning methods as well as engage in research activity and the benchmarking of this activity on international standards. The distinctiveness of the mission statement is relatively low and the same statement could apply to several other departments and programmes in Economic Sciences across Greece. The department operates in a very competitive landscape of departments of Economic Sciences and while the transition from the previous department of Accounting and Finance has offered ample opportunities to shape the offering and making it unique this has not happened. The scientific field of the department is clearly included in the international categorisation of scientific fields in education, by UNESCO (ISCED 2013) and more specifically in field 0311 Economics.

IHU does not have a clear strategy for the development of the department and the new undergraduate programme. From the analysis provided it was not evident that the curriculum takes into consideration market needs, new academic developments in the relevant areas and offers an interdisciplinary approach to studies.

While there is a plan for the development of the permanent teaching staff of the department, the availability of new posts acts as an important constraint. This hinders the department's efforts towards growing the programme and creates significant threats for the student experience and research activities. In contrast, the department is relatively well resourced in physical infrastructure. The educational and research facilities as well as the support from central services can foster future growth in student numbers.

The curriculum covers all expected areas from a degree in Economic Sciences and is offered over 8 terms (4 years). All appropriate areas are covered, and to graduate, students must complete 45 courses while a voluntary Practical Training is offered. The learning resources are appropriate and consist of face-to-face lectures, seminars and laboratories and complementary teaching through the virtual learning environment (e-class).

While outside the scope of this accreditation (the accreditation concerns the undergraduate programme in Economic Sciences) the department offers currently a Masters and a doctoral programme aligned with the research priorities.

### Analysis of Judgement

Based on the above findings, the department fails to comply with most areas of Principle 1. Several areas require further attention and a closer monitoring by the IHU and the department. More specifically, the department has a very high student-staff ratio. The ratio for both undergraduate programmes and permanent members of staff is 361 (3246/9). This is completely out of line with any other Greek or International department of Economic Sciences the EEAP is aware. This has implications for a couple of issues. First, a high ratio can significantly

impact on the student experience. The current student-staff ratio prevents the teaching staffs' ability to offer a more personalised learning experience to students. The second area relates to the growth of permanent teaching staff. While IHU has a clear plan for growing the department, this growth is not fully controlled by the University or the department as the budgets are currently decided at the Ministry of Education. A challenging financial and economic environment could stop any new positions being funded and create problems for small peripheral departments such as this one. This area of concern together with the rapid growth in student numbers discussed above create a dangerous mix for the department's sustainability. This significant concern has not been reflected in the sustainability study for the creation of the department and the degree. The EEAP also raised questions around the initial decision to rename a department that originally had a focus on Accounting and Finance to an Economic Sciences department. This transition would, normally, require substantial allocation of additional resources that did not happen in this particular case. In addition, it was not clear why the department continued to deliver the old degree and why these students were not transferred to the Department of Accounting and Finance created in Kavala. These issues of strategic importance have not been addressed in the accreditation folder or the meetings with IHU's representatives.

### Conclusions

The IHU and the department should reconsider the student-staff ratio and develop alternative scenarios and contingencies. A closer (perhaps annual) monitoring of sustainability indicators could ensure the sustainable future of the department and the undergraduate programme under accreditation.

## 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	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
<b>b. The strategy of the Institution for its academic development</b>	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	X
Non-compliant	
<b>c. The documentation of the feasibility of the operation of the department and the study programme</b>	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	X
Non-compliant	
<b>d. The documentation of the sustainability of the new department</b>	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	X
Non-compliant	
<b>e. The structure of studies</b>	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
<b>f. The number of admitted students</b>	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
<b>g. Postgraduate studies</b>	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

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

### **Panel Recommendations**

R1.1 To address the high student-staff ratio and develop alternative scenarios and contingency plans for securing additional permanent teaching staff.

R1.2 To ensure these scenarios are complemented with a strategic approach to the appointment of new permanent teaching staff.

R1.3 To engage in an annual monitoring process regarding the size of the student cohort, the impact on the student experience, the teaching needs, and the research activities of the department.

## 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**

#### Findings

The Institution implements a Quality Assurance Policy which is aligned with the principles provided by HAHE. The Institution has in place an accredited Internal Quality Assurance System, and formulates and applies a Quality Assurance Policy, which is part of its strategy, specializes in the operation of the new academic units and the new study programs, and is accompanied by annual quality assurance goals for the continuous development and improvement of the academic units and the study programmes.

The undergraduate programme of Economic Sciences has defined objectives and follows to a certain degree national and international practices. The programme is comprehensive and focused, with a sensible balance of fundamental and applied learning outcomes. The overall

structure and content of the programme is very similar to other established programmes in Greece. There is a reasonable balance of core and elective courses, with appropriate depth and coverage of current and emerging themes.

One important source of feedback for monitoring and improving quality is student questionnaires. Unfortunately, participation from students in the questionnaires is low (as in many other institutions around the country). Particular attention should be given by the department in trying to remedy this problem and instil to students and teachers alike that quality is a fundamental dimension in all aspects of human endeavour be it academic or professional.

Another important source of feedback for monitoring and improving quality comes from external stakeholders (and later on, from the alumni). However, this feedback process is rather ad-hoc, based on personal contacts among teaching staff and external stakeholders. The department should seek the establishment of an Advisory Board comprising permanent teaching staff and external stakeholders (and later on also include alumni). Although there are no graduates yet, the department should aim to establish an alumni network. Establishing such a network would help students link to professional networks nationally and internationally.

The department has established a formal teaching staff advisor scheme to assist students throughout their studies, which is quite demanding in terms of student numbers. Discussions with students indicated that this scheme is not advertised and therefore utilised properly. Apart from that, students indicated that teaching staff are helpful and always available when students need advice or assistance in their studies.

The programme is compliant with the ECTS system. The students have opportunities to take courses abroad, thanks to ERASMUS program. Participation in Erasmus by students or teaching staff remains extremely small for the nature of the University (branding itself as International Hellenic).

All course syllabi and the undergraduate course catalogue are rigorous and provide clear information on course structure and learning outcomes. The teaching staff set clear expectations on the courses and clarify the course assessment methods in the beginning of each academic term.

During its discussions with industrial representatives, the EEAP received feedback on the lack of specialisation and alignment of the degree with the local economy.

During its discussions with students, the EEAP heard that the students were satisfied by the overall atmosphere in the department and the help and guidance they get from their teachers. Student interviews indicated a strong interest for closer interaction with industry and further opportunities to prepare themselves for the labour market. Currently, a rather small percentage of students participate in and benefit from practical training.

The department seems to have efficient secretarial services, a well-equipped library and modern technical infrastructure.

### Analysis of Judgement

Several weak points impacting Quality Assurance were identified which need to be attended by the department. These points relate to the lack of evidence in terms of implementation, monitoring and any adjustments made attributed to the existence of the quality assurance process. We have not seen a solid evidence-driven approach. It is unclear to the EEAP if these weak points are yet another outcome of the high student-staff ratio or the lack of support from central University services or in fact a combination of both. The quality assurance process is described in the accreditation folder, but we have not seen substantial evidence that it is

actually working in practice. Cases where the implementation of the assurance policy led to changes in the curriculum were limited and it appears that the main focus of the department is on the collection of data and evidence but with limited action upon them.

### Conclusions

There is substantial work required in this area. While processes exist and are well documented there is lack of evidence on the actual changes these processes have driven and how the department has acted upon requests from internal (students) or external stakeholders.

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

R2.1 The department should find ways to increase student participation in the evaluation questionnaires.

R2.2 The department should create an Advisory Board by engaging external stakeholders. The Advisory Board can be at the programme or department level.

R2.3 Progressively establish an alumni network. The first graduates are expected in 2023 and the department should have the necessary infrastructure in place for them.

R2.4 Make better use of Erasmus opportunities for teaching staff and student exchanges.

R2.5 Organise information sessions around key aspects of the degree, i.e., internships, Erasmus etc. These could take the form of refreshers events at the beginning of the academic year.

### **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

### Findings

The Department of Economics, School of Economics and Management, of IHU was established under Law 4610 and is the continuation – not so much thematically, alas to a considerable extent in terms of teaching staff – of the pre-existing Department of Accounting and Finance of the TEI of Central Macedonia. The programme of studies was certified by the University in June 2019. The first group of entering students arrived in September 2019. There have been no graduates yet.

The programme of studies includes 60 courses two-thirds (40) of which are compulsory, five compulsory with some choice, and the rest are presumably electives. The word “presumably” signifies that the Study Guide (B11) is fairly confusing, not allowing a clear delineation of which is which. The document was also written a year ago on the basis of assumptions for three Sections (Τομείς) that never materialized! This relates to our opening comment on the significant delay in organizing the accreditation visit and the submission of the accreditation folder (over a year apart). Unfortunately, the style of exposition of the Study Guide is not user friendly and it was a struggle for the EEAP to fully understand the structure of the studies.

The programme of studies contains no prerequisites. It provides no concentrations. While this is a practice followed in other departments across the country, it allows students to progress in their studies without passing the appropriate courses and creates a long tail of students in the final years.

The expressed expectation for establishing the new programme of studies were to create a study framework compatible with modern economic science and one that satisfies the needs of the Greek national market. While a commendable objective, members of EEAP found these goals too general and without a clear strategic path of how to reach it. During our interviews we saw little evidence that such an objective can be achieved. The extant teaching staff struggle to cover the breadth of the programme, and they use adjuncts to teach a bit less than half of the courses. On the student side, we did not see clear awareness of the programme and the possibilities it offers.

The Study Guide uses all the appropriate words regarding the learning objectives. The general areas are reported to be economic theory and policy, business economics, finance, accounting, statistics and econometrics, and information science. It was difficult for us to judge whether these objectives are being achieved as there are no graduates yet. To the department’s acclaim, they will be thoroughly re-examining the study programme right after the first batch of graduates.

The graduates of the programme have the recognized professional recognition of the economic profession by the relevant professional body.

While the Study Guide makes explicit reference to the provision of an academic advisor for every student at the beginning of their studies to the end (p.30) we saw little awareness of that initiative among students and no discussion with the teaching staff. We attributed that to the newness of the programme, the recent challenging transition, and the pandemic during the critical years 2020-2021 which limited contact between teaching staff and students.

The course outlines are standardized and satisfactory.

The programme of studies defines a voluntary internship (Πρακτική Άσκηση) of 2-month duration in lieu of one course.

The Department has put together a list of courses through which a student can receive IT certification. This is commendable, even though the students did not seem quite aware of it.

### Analysis of Judgement

Our judgement reflects the rather dated evidence provided. As already mentioned in the introductory remarks there has been a significant gap between the submission of the accreditation folder and the accreditation visit without any updates. The members of EEAP found the design and orientation of the programme fairly unfocused. The programme covers a whole lot of ground, but it provides little focus and specialization. There are no prerequisites. There are no concentrations. Students can perhaps, if advised very well, put together some specialization during the second half of the programme that makes them attractive – the programme starts with courses of general background, progresses to courses of more specialized background, and ends with courses of more specialized knowledge – but with high student-staff ratio and the lack of very clear student advising process this looks rather difficult for the average student. The EEAP wishes to highlight that our judgement is aligned with student feedback received during the relevant session.

Our questions to the teaching staff of what differentiates this programme of a newly established regional university from other potent competitors in economics from central universities went more or less unanswered or vaguely addressed. So did our questions of where the programme / department ranks in relation to others in the country. This gave the impression that they had not spent adequate time on considering the marketability of the programme. Perhaps a reason for this is that the students keep coming – the department is allocated many more than they request annually – and that a significant number of the new class declared the programme as their first choice. Nobody seemed to be clear what factors accounted for the latter though.

### Conclusions

This Department lost its base in 2019 when its area of focus as TEI was taken over by the sister academic unit in Kavala. EEAP's impression was that the programme of studies was quickly put together under tectonic changes – merger of four TEI in Macedonia to create one large regional University a few years back – while the teaching staff did not receive much help in the process. Some external involvement in the programme design was reported, but we think there is room for greater involvement by external actors in the future evolution of the programme. Moreover, the faculty were saddled with more than 2000 “legacy” students from the previous regime (with a different focus) who require care to graduate. Plus, of course, the significant intake of new students in the new programme.

Significant work is needed on various fronts to stabilize the programme, make it competitive to others, as well as distinguishable from others.

## Panel Judgement

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

## Panel Recommendations

R3.1 The department should work to develop a clearer strategy for the undergraduate programme in economic sciences. This may involve the definition of a few areas of concentration.

R3.2 A good way to draw advise and broader expertise is through the constitution of an Advisory Board that includes academics, prospective employers, other local actors, and, in the future, prominent alumni.

R3.3 The survey of the graduating class – which has been implemented with the old programme – should also continue with the new programme in economic science. The survey provides very useful information regarding the marketability of graduates and creates a link with alumni.

R3.4 The documents provided by the department must be streamlined and become more user friendly. The Study Guide clearly needs work. Other documents – such as B9 (Στοχοθεσία) – provide quite ambitious goals without explanation elsewhere in the application of how to achieve them.

## 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**

#### Findings

The programme consists of theoretical courses, labs, and exercises. Labs are typically carried out with the help of computers and tend to focus on quantitative exercises and real cases. Access to the basic learning material is reported satisfactory. We were unable to get information about detailed readings lists from academic journals.

There is very little information regarding the way student complaints are handled besides those regarding grades (student to professor). While mention of the Student Advocate (Συνήγορος του φοιτητή) is made, little evidence of it could be seen. Students evaluate the courses electronically, but they are disconnected from the process afterwards. In other words, students are unaware of the results of course evaluation. The results of course evaluations are utilized by the department and MODIP.

There is little evidence of adequate student counselling. A member of the teaching staff is formally identified as the academic counsellor for all first-year students (p.24 of Certification Proposal) which seems quite inadequate given the number of students entering the programme. Students appeared quite confused regarding counselling. And this was in direct contrast to the information in the Study Guide which, as mentioned in the previous section (Principle 3), identifies pairing of new incoming students and individual teaching staff.

Quite interesting to the EEAP, there is limited awareness of ERASMUS opportunities among students, very little (if any) mention in the documents of the department, and almost no activity on that front. This is incompatible with a University that brands itself as International. International mobility of both teaching staff and students is virtually inexistent.

#### Analysis of Judgement

The department offers the basic study infrastructure. There is not substantial activity to create a programme of studies that it is student-centered, has an advanced pedagogical strategy and a rich assessment profile. There is also poor student access to advising which limits opportunities for students. The EEAP's judgement and perspective on student-centered learning is informed by best practice in their home institutions and other accreditation visits. The use of slides and some online material does not reflect efforts to take into consideration student needs.

#### Conclusions

Limited evidence of a modern student-centered approach. It feels and sounds like classic old-style teaching methods with the infusion of the occasional annotation in the material.

#### **Panel Judgement**

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

#### **Panel Recommendations**

R4.1 Improve the whole climate of student-centred approach. This includes teaching methods – e.g., group learning, presentations to peers, student access to research, interactive methods – academic advising, student awareness and satisfaction with the programme.

R4.2 Increase the interaction of the Department (and its students) with external institutions, including other academic, public and private players, especially prospective employers and the broader local community.

R4.3 Encourage/promote internship experience (Πρακτική Άσκηση), both formal and informal.

R4.4 Institutionalize and promote international mobility of students and teaching staff. ERASMUS is one well known avenue that the Department must pay attention to. Mobility can also be supported by other means.

## **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**

#### Findings

Early in the 1<sup>st</sup> semester of the academic year the department organizes an information session addressing the newly entering class. Information regarding the programme of studies as well as procedures, facilities, student rights and obligations, is also accessible through the website.

There is no reported significant effort to follow the progress of students besides their performance in class. No scholarships are available.

The department participates in the ERAMUS programme through the appropriate central office (international relations) of the university. Very little movement was observed on that front. Also, very little awareness, if any, among the students. It is indicative that the mobility programme is not mentioned in the relevant section of the certification application.

The Diploma and Diploma Supplement are available for all graduates in both Greek and English.

The programme of studies does not include a Thesis (διπλωματική εργασία). The EEAP appreciates the challenges this would pose to a department with a very high student-staff ratio, but this is not a pedagogical argument for not considering a thesis in the final semesters.

Internships (Πρακτική Άσκηση) are voluntary. [They were obligatory in the predecessor TEI programme of studies.] Formal internships last 2 months, can be taken during the 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, or 8<sup>th</sup> semester (out of 12) and substitute one compulsory elective course. Such internships can be carried out in public or private organizations.

#### Analysis of judgement

The Department seems to provide a standardized type of programme to the students. [Of course, with exceptions that depend on the motivation of the individual instructor.] The programme covers the minimum basics in order to satisfy the criteria that guarantee the professional recognition of the degree. A lot more needs to be done for making the programme attractive and competitive within the Greek market.

#### Conclusions

The department will do very well to review the programme of studies at the end of this academic year – as planned – when the first graduating class exits the doors of the university. We believe a lot can be done for improvement on the basis of the EEAP's work and the experiences of the students.

#### **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 department should work hard in creating a more welcoming environment to students conducive to today's standards of learning. Items for attention here could include:

- Improve new student welcoming experience with more than just one massive impersonal event.
- Encourage student community developing through initiatives. Any aspect of student volunteerism currently seems to be absent.
- Try to remain as current as possible in terms of teaching methods by introducing teamwork and other learning experiences beyond the typical lecturing and formal labs. For instance, such channels of learning could include as expert invitations to the classroom in the form of guest lectures, company visits, interactive lectures with practitioners, etc.
- Integrate soft skills (presentation, teamwork etc) in the delivery of the programme.
- Bring research to the classroom.
- Institutionalize ERASMUS and other mobility programmes for both students and faculty.

R5.2 Judging by the quality of the folder submitted for accreditation, a lot more can be done in improving the presentation style as well as content quality. A lot of the material was close to the template and not very informative.

## **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**

#### Findings

The department's permanent teaching staff and researchers have published 75 papers within the last 6 years in different journals. They have also published 76 papers in conference proceedings. The rate of publications in peer-reviewed journals corresponds to a single publication per person per year. Most of these publications are in rather low impact factor journals. This leads to a rather low number of citations for the research produced. Moreover, their distribution is quite uneven; for many researchers, publishing a paper or participating in an international conference is not a regular activity. The department does not seem to carry any research projects or contracts which impacts the capacity of its members to increase their research productivity. The department does not support research initiatives, at least not from a financial point of view.

When it comes to recruitment, the department applies all the legal requirements for changes in academic positions or for the recruitment of new teaching staff. An assistant professor has

been recruited over the last five years. Nevertheless, it seems difficult for assistant or associate professors to get promoted (become full professors) because of a rather scarce research activity and heavy teaching and administrative loads.

It is not quite clear whether the teaching staff and the researchers of the department have to work on their own on research issues or whether they can cooperate with other researchers of the university, located in different cities (Thessaloniki, Kavala). Such cooperations do not feature in the documents the EEAP has received; however, on the website of the University, the department appears as part of the Faculty of Economics and Management which offers several undergraduate programmes in seven different locations.

Finally, there are eleven Ph.D. students reported on the department's website.

### Analysis of judgement

The research performance of the department is rather poor. This is due to high student-staff ratio and the importance of the teaching activity and administrative responsibilities. It seems obvious that under these conditions the department's members cannot fulfil their research activity in a satisfactory manner. The department could, nevertheless, put some emphasis and support, even in a light way, the younger colleagues on research issues and activities. The lack of an active Erasmus programme does not allow the researchers to travel abroad and spend some time in other universities. Equally the high student-staff ration does not allow the department to offer sabbaticals to teaching staff.

### Conclusions

The panel considered that the department needs to significantly improve on research issues.

### **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	
Partially compliant	<b>X</b>
Non-compliant	

### **Panel Recommendations**

R6.1 The department's members must develop research activities in a more systematic way, by participating to national and international projects, attending international conferences and publishing papers in higher impact factor journals.

R6.2 It is important to proceed to the replacement of eventual future departures to retirement by young researchers who feature important publication activity and are inserted in international research networks. The department cannot afford to lose any teaching staff and they need to ensure appropriate mechanisms for staff retention exist.

R6.3 The department should adopt a more proactive approach to support research.

## **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**

#### Findings

The department has 9 academic staff members, 3 members EDIP, 2 members ETEP (technical staff) plus 2 persons for administrative support.

The department and generally the university have rather adequate facilities for the effective delivery of the programme (19 teaching rooms and labs) – they also have a web platform supporting e-learning, email and e-gram (for administrative purposes). The department also features most of the usual students' services. However, one should mention the lack of rooms and places where students can meet in a more relaxing way and exchange knowledge.

The website has interesting information for the students and specifically for the freshers. When the EEAP met the students, however, the latter focused on some issues concerning

missing or insufficient information. Students from the previous undergraduate programme consider that the department does not always pay sufficient attention to their specific cases and does not or cannot bring appropriate answers to their needs.

As already mentioned in previous sections of this report, Erasmus exchanges are very limited.

#### Analysis of judgement

There is dedicated office space for the department and enough classrooms with various capacities, which are well equipped. There are also dedicated labs for student use and for teaching. The library provides access to various databases as well as electronic access to publications, books, and academic journals.

Information and Material for all thematic units are uploaded on the electronic learning platform (e-class), which contains useful learning material. Some students complain however about not having access to books and documents because they were registered in the previous undergraduate programme. This reflects a rather technical issue around access to textbooks that offers a limited number and therefore once a student has reached their quota cannot access any additional textbooks.

The department does not feature some important student support facilities for students, such as an ERASMUS Office and an Enterprise Liaison Office. There is a Student Advisor Support service for the students to seek advice on their study programme as well for the resolution of possible personal problems.

#### Conclusions

The available resources and student support of the undergraduate programme meet most but not all of the expectations of the students and of the EEAP.

#### **Panel Judgement**

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

### **Panel Recommendations**

R7.1 The department must develop an Erasmus connection and programme for students. This is urgent, because it represents a great opportunity for students' learning.

R7.2 The department should specifically consider several issues that concern students from the previous undergraduate programme especially around timetabling and balance (specifically around delivery) of courses.

R7.3 The Department should consider improving its information system in order to give students information and feedback to their questions in shorter timeframes.

## **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**

#### Findings

The Department uses various technologies and information management systems in evaluating the programme and the courses from students. The department focuses on management and monitoring of data concerning the course structure and organization.

There is not yet available data for graduate students since the undergraduate programme has not complete a full cycle.

There is a process, methods and effective procedures in place for collecting and evaluating information on study programmes and human resources continually updated by professional services.

#### Analysis of judgement

The University collects useful statistical information on the satisfaction of students for the programmes and on courses they attend, which helps for the evaluation of the teaching staff and for the expression of the learning dynamics of the department.

The University also collects statistical data about the profile of the student body, which offers useful information on the characteristics, the needs and challenges faced by the students. The results of the student evaluations are examined and analysed at the general assembly meeting,

so that all members of teaching staff are informed and participate in the improvement process. The collected data are utilized to identify the points that need improvement, in order to design and launch appropriate actions. The department recognizes that evaluation is an important mechanism for maintaining and improving the quality of the programme.

### Conclusions

The above findings are in line with the panel expectations.

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

R8.1 The panel recommends that the department collects, in the future, data about the career progression of graduates. This could give the programme a better awareness of its alumni basis.

## **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**

#### Findings

The internet sites of the University and of the department are well organized. In relation of content, it is in Greek only. The content of Erasmus Program is in English but in a comprehensive form (links to acrobat pdf documents). The Greek version of the website is user friendly, clear, accurate and easily accessible. It provides all relevant information concerning, the department and teaching staff profiles, educational process for the new study programme (Study Guide, criteria of assessment, teaching methods). Each course information regarding the content, bibliography and exams is provided clearly. Moreover, other information is provided concerning student services and timetable. There is also information about research activities, practical training as well as for graduate thesis (for the TEI programme). The section with the department's Quality Assurance Policy and related documents is available in Greek only.

There is also information for students' facilities, and various educational platforms such as e-gram, e-learning, e-mail, Evdoxos as well as internet connections such as the node ATLAS for the process of the practical training.

#### Analysis of judgement

The internet site of the department was completed in 2021. Information is fairly accurate, updated with news and announcements of the department and easily accessible. However, students have low level of information on activities such as the Erasmus Programme, the Academic Advisor services as well as about the transition to the new programme, specifically, for TEI's graduates.

Substantial improvements can be made in relation to information provided in English. This will help the department to internationalize further and attract incoming Erasmus students.

### Conclusions

The Study Programme achieves substantial compliance with this principle. This is due to the significant difference between the Greek and English version of the website.

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

R9.1 The department/Institution is encouraged to put in place mechanisms that would assure the sustainability and long-term functionality of the department's website which was completed in 2021. Currently a teaching staff member is solely responsible for the website.

R9.2 It is important to continue the maintenance and support of the information systems. In relation for a better and more effective information system, it is important to inform and encourage students, in the context of welcoming events, to visit the website of the department. Also, the website of the University should provide information about public transport.

R9.3 The department is strongly encouraged to improve the content in English.

## 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**

#### Findings

MODIP has the responsibility of Continuous Internal Reviewing of the Study Program, in cooperation with OMEA. The department completed a Periodic Internal Review of the Programme at the end of 2021. This is expected to be repeated on an annual basis. The internal evaluation report takes into consideration various qualitative and quantitative targets and indicators in accordance with the European Quality Standards and in relation of HAHE directions as well as to the goals of the department.

More specifically, OMEA collects and analyses the data and information gathered from various internal and external sources with respect to evaluation of the programme. It includes elements such as student population, students' evaluation of both courses and teaching methods, as well as the satisfaction from teaching staff. It also includes additional information from the industry and the market through the graduates (previous programme thus far) and external stakeholders in relation of local needs and employability of graduates. The process in place considers that OMEA submits the report to the MODIP for discussion and constructive feedback with the teaching staff in the General Assembly of the department. In this process,

students and external stakeholders are not informed and they do not participate. This creates an internal inconsistency to the quality assurance process as key stakeholders with substantial input are not informed about the outcomes.

The recent internal evaluation acknowledges the department’s proposal for accreditation and outlines the key findings from the areas of high student-staff ratio leading to constrains in resources that would enable of the future development of the new Study Program and of a strong research culture within the Department. The second Internal Review that should be carried out this year should be able to provide indicative progress. Given the time distance between the submission of the accreditation folder and the visit the EEAP expected to see evidence of the second internal review. Such evidence was not presented to EEAP during the visit.

### Conclusions

The Panel considers that the Study Programme achieves substantial compliance with this principle.

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

R10.1 The Panel strongly highlights that the prerequisite for the successful transformation and upgrading of the new Study Programme is the monitoring and adaptation to market trends and the progress of science. For the effective implementation of the programme, a reliable and flexible action plan is needed with measurable and controlled goals and key performance indicators. It is important to follow up and monitor the implementation of this action plan.

R10.2 To enhance the quality of the programme, it is strongly advised that the department continuous the process of Internal Evaluation, by encouraging stronger participation of students and external stakeholders. The department should also consider more frequent meetings with MODIP during the transitional stage.

R10.3 The report of the internal evaluation should be discussed among all members of the department. Reflections on the findings of the Internal Evaluation need to be considered along with the targets and objectives of the Business Plan and Feasibility Study of the Programme as a whole.

## **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**

#### Findings

This is the first evaluation of the undergraduate study programme of the Department. There has been only an external evaluation of the TEI Serres back in 2013. It is not directly relevant to the new study UG programme of the Department. The EEAP has raised this issue in detail in the opening section of this accreditation report.

The teaching staff are aware of the importance of the external review and welcome any suggestions for improvement.

External stakeholders are willing to participate in the internal and external evaluation procedures in the future. As the department is still in the transition stage, their contribution is not institutionalized yet.

The department has a new internet site and an internal evaluation procedure with students evaluating each course, teaching methods and staff.

#### Analysis of judgement

The panel acknowledges the commitment and efforts of the teaching staff for improving the quality assurance process. Due to lack a previous study programme accreditation review, it is difficult for the EEAP to comment with certainty on this this principle. Our judgement and recommendations are forward looking.

The last final Internal Evaluation Report has been submitted to HAHE with an action plan with quantitative and quality goals and activities in mitigating weakness of the programme. The EEAP has not been offered information about these suggestions of HAHE and their implementation. The department expects that these areas will be improved in the future, but it is unclear how.

### Conclusions

The Study Programme achieves full compliance with this principle.

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

R11.1 The department is encouraged to identify key strategic issues in relation to teaching staff development, quality improvement of study programme, teaching and research culture through a Strategic and Business Plan.

R11.2 It is strongly encouraged to demonstrate a more active participation of students and all relevant stakeholders in the quality assurance process.

## **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**

#### Findings

A particular problem that the department has been facing since its inception is that of the transition from TEI to a University department without impacting the quality of studies. The department has put in place a detailed procedure to implement the transition from TEI as smoothly as possible. The approach followed is quite sensible and consists of three main actions: (1) Create correspondences between courses offered by the department and courses offered by the TEI (2) allow students from TEI to continue their studies in the department for those students who wish to do so and (3) let the old TEI programme run until students registered on the old programme graduate.

While on paper the process is well documented, interviews with students revealed that the timetable significantly constraints their efforts to transition from the previous Accounting and Finance degree to the new Economic Sciences one. Indicative is the fact that some students

face clashes of courses and others have a very unbalanced load of activities across terms with four courses in term 1 and nine courses in term 2.

### Analysis of Judgement

In addition to the burden of coping with the integration of TEI, the department is facing several difficulties of its own to achieve a smooth operation within the wider Institution. Students from the pre-existing programmes have also raised significant concerns around the availability of courses, timetable clashes that prevent attendance and an unsustainable workload during the assessment and examinations period.

### Conclusions

Given the constraints and the available infrastructure and student numbers the department has performed well in setting up its own structure and at the same time preparing and implementing the transition.

### **Panel Judgement**

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

### **Panel Recommendations**

R12.1 Continue the efforts to successfully finalise the transition while intensifying the efforts for improving the teaching and research environment.

R12.2 Ensure that timetable and course balance issues are not detrimental to the student experience.

## **PART C: CONCLUSIONS**

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

- The survey of graduate destinations is an area of good practice. We would encourage the department to expand this good practice to the graduates of the UG in Economic Sciences.

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

- The department has a relatively weak differentiation strategy for its UG programme in Economic Sciences. The programme is offered in a very competitive landscape with similar degrees offered across several established institutions that tend to attract strong students.
- There is an unsustainable student-staff ratio. This has been identified in the 2013 external evaluation report and has not been addressed. The current requirement of simultaneously delivering two large undergraduate programmes has significant negative implications for the student experience and the ability of teaching staff to engage in research activities.
- There is some engagement with external stakeholders but only at an informal level and through a survey. Stakeholders appear to be engaged more with the TEI programme than the current UG in Economic Sciences.
- The department has limited international mobility for teaching staff and students. This is in direct contrast to the name and nature of the university presented as International Hellenic University.
- Student voice has relatively low impact on programme changes. The main way students contribute to programme development is through evaluation surveys.

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

- The department should develop a clear strategy for the UG programme in Economic Sciences. Currently the sustainability study does not offer a detailed strategic direction for the future of the degree. The department should consider developing a unique offering based on the expertise of teaching staff, the human geography of students and the needs of external stakeholders.
- The department should formalise its relationship with external stakeholders. This could take the form of an Advisory Board at the departmental or programme level.
- The department should develop a clear internationalisation strategy aligned with the institutional one. It should encourage student and teaching staff

mobility through the ERASMUS programme but also explore ways of internationalising the curriculum.

- The department should provide additional opportunities for student input into the programme development. Best practice from other institutions suggests that students can contribute to the quality assurance processes through representations at OMEA.
- The University should urgently address the low student-staff ratio. The current level is clearly unsustainable and will have implications for the student experience and the teaching staff professional development.

#### IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: **8, and 11.**

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **5, 7, 9, 10, and 12.**

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are: **1, 2, 3, 4, and 6.**

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

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

## The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname	Signature
<b>1. Professor Fragkiskos Filippaios (Chair)</b> University of East Anglia, United Kingdom	
<b>2. Professor Michel Dimou</b> Université du Sud Toulon-Var, France	
<b>3. Professor Nicholas Vonortas</b> The George Washington University, United States of America	
<b>4. Mr Stelios Mastrogiannakis</b> Member of the Economic Chamber of Greece	
<b>5. Mr Athanasios Vasilaridis</b> Student in the Department of Economics, University of Western Macedonia, Greece	