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HELLENIC REPUBLIC



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

Civil Engineering

Institution: International Hellenic University

Date: 22 October 2022

Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of
the New Undergraduate Study Programme in operation of the **Civil
Engineering** of the **International Hellenic University** 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 **Civil Engineering** 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 Nikiforos Stamatiadis (Chair)

University of Kentucky, USA

2. Professor Theodore Stathopoulos

Concordia University, Canada

3. Professor Emeritus George Haritos

The University of Akron, USA

4. Mr. Eleftherios Avramidis

Technical Chamber of Greece, Greece

5. Ms. Georgia Tsafaridou

Democritus University of Thrace, Greece

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

The External Evaluation and Accreditation Panel (EEAP) met for the first time on October 17, 2022 in an executive meeting for the required introductions of the team members and to discuss the approach for the visit, the roles of the panel members, and process to be followed. The chair indicated the variable documents to be reviewed prior to the site visit and the members noted that most have already reviewed most of the documents provided.

The onsite visit was conducted via online conference meetings due to timing and ease of travel scheduling and was scheduled for October 17 and 18, 2022. An extra session with students was held on October 19, since during the planned first meeting a technician was present in the room and this was considered as potential bias for the answers provided. The committee wrote the report in the following days (October 19-22) though collaborative meetings also held online.

The EEAP met initially with the Department Chair and the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs of the University for initial presentations of the university and the Department. The next session involved members of the faculty charged with the accreditation efforts (OMEA) including those at the university level (MODIP) and a discussion ensued to address some of the EEAP questions resulting from the presentations and documents that the EEAP had already reviewed. A detailed presentation of the various activities of the Department regarding the study program, faculty and staff, student body, and research activities was provided to the EEAP.

The second day started with a meeting with the faculty where a short presentation was made followed by a free-flowing question-and-answer period. A session with current students in the program followed where their opinion was sought on several issues relative to the program, their experiences and course loads. The next session focused on the review of the current facilities through a discussion to address EEAP questions. It should be noted that a pre-recorded video tour of the facilities was provided that EEAP reviewed prior to the meeting. The following session was with potential employers and social partners of the program aiming to address the readiness of the graduates for the market, as well as identify areas of cooperation between the Department and employers. It should be noted though that during this meeting, the evaluation of graduates was not feasible, since the program has not graduated any students yet and most of the discussion identified the strengths of the previous program graduates. The final two sessions were, first, with OMEA and MODIP to address any lingering questions and, second, with the Department Head and the Vice Rector along with the OMEA and MODIP members where additional questions were addressed, and a quick summary of the preliminary conclusions from the visit was presented. A second meeting with the students was held on the third day to overcome potential bias in the answers provided during the original meeting due to the presence of an IT technician supervising the meeting.

Overall, the faculty and staff had prepared a rigorous visit program with presentations and discussions. They were open to a discussion of issues and eager to answer questions and share with the EEAP both the strengths and the weaknesses of the programs. The EEAP was impressed by the exemplary level of cooperation by all members of the Department and by the facilities of the program.

A series of reports and other documents were provided to the EEAP prior and during the visit. The main documents that were used included the Internal Evaluation that the Department developed in March 2022, the Curriculum Guide and course syllabi, the evaluation metrics and goals for the future, and all operational guides of the Department. All PowerPoint presentations and documents requested were provided.

It is apparent that the online discussion and meetings worked well and allowed for the completion of the program in a succinct manner. Obviously, the lack of any social interactions during the visit is detrimental to the overall approach, since they provide more insight on the various aspects of the program and allow for additional, oftentimes informal, feedback and discussions. If this process continues in the future, it may be desirable to spread the meetings over a longer period, since typically in-person onsite visits last three days.

The EEAP recommendations made seem sometimes repetitive. It was deemed appropriate to leave the recommendations at each principle as they relate to it, but finally all distinct recommendations are summarized in the conclusion of the report.

III. New Undergraduate Study Programme in Operation Profile

The Civil Engineering program is a new program developed as part of the reorganization of the academic environment in Greece that resulted in the elimination of the Technological Scientific Institutions (TEI) and their evolution as Engineering Schools. It should be noted that there is a distinction between Polytechnic and Engineering Schools in Greece, since the first are considered as graduating Engineers with recognized professional engineering status and allowing them to register in the Technical Chamber of Greece (TEE) while the latter are in a limbo situation without any recognition of professional engineering status.

The unit was established in 1983 as the Department of Civil Construction Works with a 4-year study program and in 2013 it was transformed to the Department of Civil Engineering of Technical Works and Department of Surveying and Geodetic Engineering of Technical Works. Even though both Departments were sharing an administrative unit, each had different entry requirements for students, and each followed a separate study program. In 2019, the TEI units in Greece were eliminated and the Department was reorganized as a Department of Civil Engineering offering a 5-year civil engineering study program. The first students entered the Department in 2019 and the first graduates are expected to matriculate in 2024.

The students of the 5-year program are required to complete a total of 59 courses (47 required and 12 electives) along with the completion of the Diploma Thesis. The program has an equivalency of 300 ECTS. Currently, there is no practical training required. Students are required to follow a specific concentration area and they customize the program and their elective courses in one of the four available thematic areas. The Department has developed a detailed Curriculum Guide to ensure that students understand the program and how to plan their courses for completing their degree. In addition, course syllabi for all courses taught are available in the web page of the Department. Students are given the opportunity to evaluate the courses they attend, and their input is considered in adjusting course content and delivery aspects.

Graduates of the program currently do not obtain the title of Civil Engineer, nor they can become members of TEE. This creates a great professional uncertainty for the upcoming graduates and hampers the selection of the Department in being an attractive option for entering students after the Panhellenic Exams. At this point, students appear to be in limbo since they have no clear indication as to whether their professional engineering status would be recognized.

There are currently 9 faculty members that support the educational and research activities of the program and most have doctoral degrees from institutions in Greece with several from abroad. To accomplish the educational requirements of the program, the Department employs 13 adjuncts part-time, who cover the courses and provide the required lectures. Even though the educational mission of the Department is covered in this manner, the research mission is hampered, since these adjuncts do not contribute to the research enterprise of the unit. The Department has a reasonable number of publications and research activities, both in projects and funds. The Department has not yet been evaluated by any external committee – the present evaluation is the first one. Given that the present evaluation takes place at the time that there have not been any graduates for the program yet, the EAAP suggests that the second external evaluation take place after the first class of graduates. The Department follows the required procedure for establishing quantitative metrics that define their progress as well as target goals to be achieved short-term.

For the first three years of its existence, the average number of registered undergraduate students has been decreasing with a total of 50 in 2022-2023 and a total of 206 registered students since the inception of the program. The facilities for delivering the program (classrooms, laboratories, libraries, etc.) are adequate and modern.

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

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

Findings

The Department of Civil Engineering was created in 2019 because of the legal requirements of the elimination the TEI and their evolution as universities. The Department focused its program on Civil Engineering and developed it to cover these educational and professional needs after reviewing other similar programs in Greece and abroad.

The mission of the Department was presented during the first session with the Chair and the Vice Rector – the presentation was included in the documents provided. The Department has identified as its mission the delivery of a high-quality education addressing the required knowledge of a Civil Engineer and delivering graduates that can work successfully as Civil Engineers. The scientific area of the Department is in line with the international categorization of scientific fields in education, as defined in 0732 Building and Civil Engineering category of UNESCO (ISCED 2013).

Analysis of judgement

The mission of the Department is well articulated in the various documents provided and from discussions with the faculty it became apparent that they are committed in delivering a complete program to cover the educational needs of Civil Engineering. The various interactions with the faculty supported the assessment of their intent to provide a high-quality program that will properly educate its graduates. As noted above, the program developed is part of an already approved UNESCO scientific field.

Conclusions

The EEAP has found that the program is fully compliant with this sub-principle. No further recommendations are necessary.

b. The strategy of the Institution for its academic development

Findings

IHU has developed a strategy for its academic development and was provided to EEAP as attachment B3. This document outlines the operation of the university and its core principles considering the economic, developmental, and social parameters of the area. IHU has identified as its mission the development of study programs that would attract new students while promoting local economy and development and working closely with local agencies and organizations in addressing educational and research needs. An integral part of this effort is the creation of an Engineering School that would include a Department of Civil Engineering.

IHU has undergone a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis identifying as strengths the variety of topics covered, the highly qualified personnel with extensive educational and research records, as well as the presence of well-equipped labs, and modern facilities. The weaknesses include not adequate faculty numbers in several of the units, low numbers of administrative staff, need to increase research productivity, and overall lack of sufficient funding. The opportunities identified the potential for coalescing staff to create stronger research units, increased collaboration with other universities, and collaborations with industry. The threats noted the increased competitiveness of the large city universities as compared to regional ones, the lower levels of educational preparation of

students entering the university, and the need for keeping up with the fast pace of technological improvements.

IHU has designed a plan for developing an Engineering School and the presence of Civil Engineering as part of this School was considered essential. This was concluded upon reviews of the types of engineering offered in other universities and it was determined that its inclusion would be desirable. The existence of facilities and laboratories from the previous form of the Department in TEI provided an added positive indicator for developing the Department and having it as an integral part of the Engineering School.

Analysis of judgement

The overall strategic plan of IHU is considered appropriate and commensurate with its goals. The mission of the institution focuses on advancing knowledge primarily at the regional and national level while considering steps for increasing its presence at the international arena. The goals set forth are considered reasonable and are appropriate for IHU given its location and aspirations of becoming an institution of choice for entering students. IHU has focused on incorporating and developing study programs that are reflective of the market trends while considering the development and expansion of graduate programs. IHU is a result of coalescing of four previous institutions into one unit and this is clearly reflected in the SWOT analysis discussed above. The low numbers of staff at all levels, i.e., faculty, administrative staff, and technical personnel, is an issue that needs to be addressed; it was highlighted in the EEAP discussions with the Vice Rector. IHU is a regional university and as such it needs to identify a niche for becoming a choice among students when completing their choice priorities after the entry exams.

The Department of Civil Engineering is considered an integral part of the School of Engineering since it is always present in such schools both in Greek and international institutions. The existence of the TEI Departments provided for an easy transition to the new program and allowed for incorporation of the existing knowledge and expertise in the new Department. Even though the Department has adequate facilities to complete its mission, the current facilities also require some updates rather than complete reconstruction, thus reducing the potential capital layout required to start a Civil Engineering program.

Conclusions

The EEAP has found that the program is fully compliant with this sub-principle. No further recommendations are necessary.

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

Findings

The Department has developed a feasibility study that identified the local needs of its existence and its parallel structure with existing programs. The Department anticipates that with the end of the current economic crisis, the demand for highly qualified Civil Engineers will be great and as such is proposing to supply the market with its graduates. Moreover, by considering climate change, the need to protect the environment, and the upcoming technological changes, it is likely that a larger number of Civil Engineers with an adequate knowledge depth may be required to address them. According to the Department's feasibility study (attachment B4), the number of institutions offering Civil Engineering degrees is reduced from 13 to eight and therefore, the development of the Department is considered a necessity to satisfy the national and regional market needs.

The Department has established a program that considered the programs of the five existing engineering schools in Greece along with programs from abroad. In principle, the program is commensurate with the other programs and provides similar type of courses. An issue that merits re-evaluation and additional consideration is the breadth of the program in relationship to its current faculty. The Department offers four concentration areas, which are considered appropriate for a typical Civil Engineering department.

Even though the program considers the socioeconomic context within it operates, there is a small number of specific local issues (e.g., seismic reinforcement of local buildings and other public works, renovation of traditional homes in the region, management of water resources, etc.) that allow for a small differentiation from other similar departments.

There are currently five other universities that graduate Civil Engineers (who can register as TEE members) and three (including the one at IHU) that will have graduates uncertain as to their professional engineering status. This is considered a detriment to these three programs since their graduates will be in limbo until their professional engineering status is recognized. The program, at least as it has been developed, would result in graduating students that would have similar knowledge as those graduating from the other universities. Therefore, it is imperative that this issue be resolved as quickly as possible and preferably before the first cohort graduates from the Department.

Analysis of judgement

The Department has developed a program that is on par with other institutions. As noted above, it has developed a 5-year study program that offers four concentrations and over 100 different courses. However, the small number of students and faculty make this breadth unsustainable. To address this issue the Department desires to hire more faculty but it is essential to develop a mid-range plan of how to address this within its current faculty and student numbers.

The long-term feasibility of the Department relies heavily on its ability to attract incoming students and increase its student body. To achieve this, the Department needs to reconsider its offerings and evaluate them under a lens of identifying niche areas that are currently lacking from other Civil Engineering programs and target new faculty hires to address these unique areas. One such area could be Humanitarian Engineering, focusing on infrastructure issues for addressing community social, environmental, and economic sustainability. Another aspect to be considered is the development of a strategic plan focused on the upcoming hires to allow for covering the required needs but also forming focus groups (critical mass) for addressing specific research and educational areas.

Conclusions

The EEAP has found that the program is substantially compliant with this sub-principle. For the longevity of the program, the Department is strongly encouraged to develop a strategic plan for future hires and identify a niche area that it could focus to become competitive with other Civil Engineering departments in Greece and attract high quality students. Moreover, development of a mid-range plan on how to address the limited number of faculty may be essential.

d. The documentation of the sustainability of the new department

Findings

The Department has developed a sustainability plan that identifies the available facilities, the personnel to provide the academic program, and other funding and support structures for its

continued operation. The Department has three buildings that they can use as part of the educational and research mission with appropriate classrooms (five), amphitheatres (two with 160 and 140 seats), and research labs (14). There are three computer labs available for student use and instruction and two labs for technical drawing.

The Department has currently 11 approved faculty positions with nine current members including one professor, two associate professors, four assistant professors, one pending finalization of appointment and one currently in search; and two lecturers (one is identified as Applications' Lecturer). In addition, the Department employs 13 adjunct instructors (all with Doctoral degrees) to address the lacking numbers of faculty required to cover the courses offered. The Department has identified needs for hiring new staff to deliver the desired program with a goal of having 15 faculty already part of the program and three in the review process by 2025. To reach full coverage, it is desired to increase the faculty by one to address retirements and reduction of the required adjuncts. It should be noted that the Department plans to continue hiring adjuncts to cover its teaching needs but at a rate of approximately 5 per year (as noted in attachment B5).

As any other public Greek university, the funding comes from the government and as such there is a need to clearly identify and demonstrate needs to be able to compete with other universities and similar departments when openings for faculty are authorized. There is an effort to increase funding from local sources using collaborative activities with industry and governmental agencies. This would be achieved easier once additional staff is hired to provide relief from educational load and allow for a more systematic effort in approaching such entities and developing partnerships.

IHU and the Department provide a variety of services for students including an academic advisor for each student, streamlined electronic records, an e-learning platform, opportunities for Erasmus exchanges, a student advocate, and sports facilities. Students can request a host of records electronically and they can be informed about their study program and all pertinent administrative requirements and announcements in the Department's web page.

Analysis of judgement

The current facilities are adequate to deliver the educational mission of the Department. However, equipment used in the amphitheatres and several of the classrooms require updating and the faculty expressed their frustration with obtaining the required funds to modernize the equipment due to the existing bureaucratic mechanisms for such requests. Most of the current labs are well equipped to address the educational needs of the courses offered but they are lacking components that could facilitate and augment research efforts. Therefore, a critical review of the future needs aiming to increase research productivity is essential. An added benefit of such expansion will be the ability to offer services for a fee to external public and private groups and thus allow for an increased and continued revenue source.

The 5-year plan that the Department has developed regarding its personnel needs is adequate. However, as noted in the sub-principle c, it is desirable for the Department to develop a strategic plan for future hires and identify priority areas of expertise for these hires. The faculty stressed the need for additional hires for both academics and technicians; however, they expressed their uncertainty as to whether these positions will be filled given the competition level for new hires among all Greek institutions.

The sustainability of the Department relies heavily in two areas. The first deals with the need to increase the faculty and staff to be able to deliver the academic component of the program

while increasing their research productivity—a required component of any Department. The second area deals with the lack of defined professional engineering status for the graduates of the program. In the absence of resolving this issue, the sustainability of the Department is highly questionable since it could be possible to have very few students selecting it as an option and thus experience a continuous decline in student numbers.

Conclusions

The EEAP has found that the program is fully compliant with this sub-principle. The facilities are adequate for the program and its faculty accomplishes an enormous workload which could be considered above and beyond normal faculty levels. However, the sustainability of the Department lies in increasing the staff and addressing the issue of the professional engineering status of the graduates. Equipping current laboratories to become research-ready and possibly used to facilitate external groups' requests could improve the research enterprise of the Department and IHU while providing them with a new revenue opportunity.

e. The structure of studies

Findings

The study program is organized as any typical Civil Engineering program. The first three years (six semesters) students follow a set of required courses that allows for their introduction in the basic scientific knowledge required for becoming an engineer. From the seventh semester, students can elect a concentration among the four provided, i.e., structures, hydraulics, transportation, and geotechnical. Each concentration area has a set of required and elective courses that provide students with a deeper understanding of the subject area. The tenth semester is devoted in the completion of the Diploma Thesis, which is required component for graduation. Each semester has a total of 30 European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) for a total of 300 ECTS and students are required to complete 47 required courses and 12 electives to graduate. The review of the course syllabi indicated that the courses cover the required knowledge content for Civil Engineering and provide an adequate coverage of each topic addressed. There are no practical training provisions currently.

The faculty use a variety of teaching methods to achieve a student-centered approach including lectures, seminars, laboratories, and projects. At the end of the semester, a course evaluation survey is completed that provides feedback to the faculty about their course content and delivery and allows the students to express their opinion on the various components of the course. The course syllabi identify a host of resources to be used during the length of the course and all lectures are available in the e-learning platform after the completion of the lecture. There was discussion regarding the background level of the students entering the Department and several faculty and students interviewed identified the potential for a two-level background: those who enter from professional high schools (EPAL) lacking a strong foundation in sciences and those from the general high schools. This could create issues with course delivery, e.g., requiring spending more time to address basic mathematics or physics, and may discourage better prepared students from attending lectures.

The Department has in place a commendable practice for not allowing students to register in higher courses without having completed lower-level courses. They require students to register first for the earlier semester courses that they have not successfully passed and then register for any ECTS for the current semester (if they have not exceeded the allowable ECTS for their current semester).

The stage of the program, i.e., it was created in 2019 and has no graduates, does not allow for evaluating the knowledge, skill, and competency of its graduates. As noted above, the issue of professional engineering status awarded has not yet been defined and as such it can become a detriment to the program.

Analysis of judgement

Overall, the study program reflects the current trends of Civil Engineering programs and has the potential to deliver the required knowledge to its graduates. The program has been designed to provide a balanced workload to the students and provides them with a degree that complies with the ECTS requirements. As it has been noted in previous sub-principles here and other parts of the report, the breadth of the program is considered untimely given the numbers of faculty and students. The continuation of the program delivery requires the provision of considerable resources in faculty to cover the courses offered. Some short-term solutions to this could be the revision of the course offerings to identify courses that can be combined and consolidated, revising the frequency of course offerings, reconsidering the number of electives offered, and temporarily reducing the number of concentration areas. The faculty noted that they realized the issues of offering such a large number of electives and are in the process of adjusting them based on the number of students attending the courses; they even consider eliminating some of the electives and offering only the required courses within each concentration.

The number of courses including projects that marry the theory with practical applications is increasing and this is considered a positive aspect of the student-centered approach. The students express their preference for an even larger number of courses that include such projects since they help in understanding the theoretical aspects of the topics more easily and allow them for visualizing the practical applications of the theory. A practice to be considered is the development of service-learning courses where the faculty can work with local agencies to identify potential local issues that students can then work to address as part of their program.

The practice of not allowing students to register for higher-level courses if they have not passed those in previous semesters is a good approach in ensuring that students have the required knowledge to progress in their studies. Drawbacks in this approach could be the timing of the offered courses and the potential for increasing the length of studies. The Department needs to pay attention to the scheduling of the courses.

The absence of practical training is an issue that was discussed both with the faculty and students. The students indicated a strong preference for practical training and the faculty concurred with this idea stating that they are considering ways to incorporate it in their study program. However, the issue of the professional engineering status is an impediment that needs to be addressed before attempting to incorporate in the curriculum.

The EEAP can only comment on the potential of the knowledge, skills, and competence acquired from the studies based on the study program and it considers it, at least as it is planned, commensurate with other Civil Engineering programs.

Conclusions

The EEAP has found that the program is fully compliant with this sub-principle. The faculty is commendable for their efforts to deliver the program in its entirety. However, to ensure the continued and full delivery of the program, the faculty needs to revisit the breadth of the offerings and concentrations and adjust them as noted above. The need for offering remedial

or tutorial services for students with lower scientific background is an aspect that needs to be evaluated and addressed accordingly, so courses could be offered unimpeded while covering the required content.

f. The number of admitted students

Findings

The Academic Year (AY) 2019-2020 was the first year of operation of the program and there were 122 students that entered the program. There has been a decreasing entry trend with 60 students entering the AY 2022-2023. The anticipated number of students in the next year is 80 and in the following years 100.

There are currently five similar Departments that could allow for transfers from/to the Department. There have been only a few such transfers in the previous years.

Analysis of judgement

The anticipated number of students is considered high given the personnel resources of the Department. Assuming that new hires will be forthcoming, then the number of entering students will be adequate to sustain the Department.

The potential for transfers from/to the Department will materialize only when the professional engineering status are defined. As it stands right now, there is no reason for a student from another Civil Engineering Department in Greece to transfer to this program, since they are not guaranteed the same professional engineering status.

Conclusions

The EEAP has found that the program is fully compliant with this sub-principle. As it has been noted before, the need for increasing the Department's personnel and determination of the professional engineering status of the graduating students are essential for the continued compliance of the Department with this sub-principle.

g. Postgraduate studies and research

Findings

The Department used to offer a graduate program focusing on re-appropriation of existing buildings and urban regeneration that was based on its prior form. The program is currently under development aiming to incorporate the new knowledge from the study program and include new areas such as strengthening and reusing buildings and geographic information systems. The new program is anticipated to start in AY 2022-2023.

The faculty have generally a very good research productivity and publication record considering their teaching and administrative workload. Per current estimates, the research load is approximately 30% while the faculty desires this to become 50%. A significant research involvement and collaboration with other institutions and external partners is noted.

Analysis of judgement

The Department recognizes the need for graduate studies and attempts to address this by resuscitating their prior program. As noted in their documentation there was a large interest in the program because it provides its graduates with an added area of expertise in an increasing area of the market. Therefore, the reinstatement of the program is considered

appropriate. Given the size of the faculty and the legal process required for establishing a graduate program, it is advisable that the Department focus on delivering this program and then once the faculty increases to reconsider the potential for any other programs.

The faculty has a good track record regarding research activities, refereed journal publications, and participations in conferences. This is more than appropriate considering their academic and administrative load, which by their estimates is approximately 70%. The faculty is encouraged to continue their efforts in this area and seek collaborations with other units both academic and industry to expand their involvement. The Department is encouraged to develop a strategic plan for its hires with an eye on research to allow for the development of critical mass units of faculty groups to become even more productive in securing research funding. Moreover, the equipment to be purchased in the future should be in line with the research requirements of the faculty to allow them to conduct their research and continue their publications.

Conclusions

The EEAP has found that the program is fully compliant with this sub-principle. No further recommendations are necessary.

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

- The Department needs to revisit and revise their strategic plan to address long- and medium-term issues such as what happens if no new faculty are hired or how the potential increase or decrease in students entering the program could be addressed; to identify priority areas to cover both teaching and research needs. The identification of a niche area could help in identifying such priority areas.
- The breadth and course offerings of the study program needs to be revisited and the Department needs to consider revision of the course offerings to identify courses that can be combined and consolidated, revising the frequency of course offerings, reconsidering the number of electives offered, and temporarily reducing the number of concentration areas.
- There is a need for organized remedial courses to address students coming from educational systems that do not fully prepare them for the rigors of the university courses.
- The need for developing service-learning projects is considered appropriate for increasing the interactions of the faculty with local agencies and industry to promote continued collaboration.
- The facilities need to be reviewed with an eye on research and equipped appropriately so they would further promote faculty research as well as potentially become funding sources for external work.
- The lack of clarity regarding graduates' professional engineering status is a detriment to the program and an impediment to the students entering the program. This needs to be resolved as soon as feasible.

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

Both the IHU and the Civil Engineering Program under external evaluation have put in place an Internal Quality Assurance System to apply a Quality Assurance Policy. The EEAP met with the Head and one of the members of this Unit (MODIP) and discussed the modalities of its function and operation. The EEAP found that MODIP strictly applies its Policy in collecting appropriate data related to the academic program and its delivery, i.e., number of students registered, student evaluations of the teaching staff, quality and quantity of research activities of academic staff, quality of support services etc., analysing them and making them available, as appropriate (parties involved and/or website(s)). This operation (collection and analysis of data) takes place on an annual basis, as per current policy. Considering the current lack of graduates from this program, the level of demand of graduates' qualifications in the labour market cannot be accomplished.

Analysis of judgement

Course evaluation questionnaires are well designed and are available for all courses of the program. However, it has also come to the attention of EEAP that participation rates in completing these course evaluation questionnaires are very low – ranging between 0 and 40% of registered students. This is problematic because such low participations make the results statistically invalid. The EEAP discussed this critical issue extensively with both the teaching staff and the students (separately). It was concluded that if students were given a few minutes during class time to fill these questionnaires out prior to their electronic submission, would probably improve participation. Also, although the collection of data from MODIP should continue occurring on an annual basis, their analysis and organization could be taking place every two years in order to capitalize the results of internal review of the program vis-à-vis the changing needs of the society, the latest research findings at the national and international level; to relieve MODIP from the necessary resources to proceed with additional investigations of trends and comparisons with respective data from other similar programs in the country; and to justify better proposals for curriculum revisions and renewal. Such biennial internal reviews would also fit well with the external evaluation of the program, currently occurring every four years.

Conclusions

The EEAP established that although there is full compliance with this Principle, some improvements regarding the student participation in the critical course evaluation process, as well as a possible reduction of frequency of the internal reviews may be constructive measures to consider for implementation after the completion of the 5-year program (2024-2025) and having the first graduating class.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Improve participation rates in course evaluation surveys by conducting them in the classroom during lecture times.
- Reduce the frequency of analysis of MODIP annually collected data, carrying it out on a biennial basis.

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 new 5-year civil engineering program was developed based on the existing civil engineering programs of the other Polytechnics in Greece with elements brought forward from

other universities abroad, mainly in Europe. As such, the structure of the program is sound and complete in terms of courses (core and electives) including courses dedicated to the acquisition of digital skills. The EEAP believes that this is an overall sound program fulfilling the credit (ECTS) requirements for the Diploma of Civil Engineer. The program was developed by faculty members with the participation of students and approved by the relevant IHU committees. The objectives, the expected learning outcomes, the intended professional qualifications have been included in the program design, whereas the details of the program structure along with the course outlines and information about the teaching staff have been published in the Student Guide, as required. Therefore, the design, approval, and the monitoring of the new undergraduate program in Civil Engineering of IHU is fully compliant with the requirements of Principle 3. The EEAP however also expressed some concerns that should be taken into consideration in the future development of the program for the well-being of the students.

Analysis of judgement

Having developed the IHU Civil Engineering Diploma program based on the other programs in Greece has not considered the scale difference in terms of number of students, available resources and number of faculty members regarding, particularly, their workload. In addition, there was an opportunity to differentiate the concentrations offered by the new program potentially offering the possibility of reducing their number and/or replacing some of them by a new direction attractive to several students who could come to IHU just to take advantage of this opportunity, which would have been unavailable elsewhere in the country. At this time, the EEAP considers it as a long-term plan to be included in an evolving strategic plan, as referred to elsewhere in this report. In the short term, the EEAP recommends to the program to re-think a scheduling plan in which the elective courses could be offered every two years to reduce the cost of the program and the presently excessive workload of the teaching staff, particularly when the administrative and service requirements are considered. Such a relief would first and foremost support the academic staff to carry out their research duties and obligations in a much more humane manner. In addition, some special consideration can be made in transforming some prerequisite courses to corequisites to assist the progress of students through the academic semesters without sacrificing the quality of the program with its well thought parameters. Attention should also be paid to the establishment of more systematic tutorials for some analysis and design courses, in which students would receive additional assistance to enhance the lecture material and apply it to the solution of problems. The EEAP has also the view, supported by both faculty and students, that establishing a systematic framework to obtain practical engineering experience either in Greece or even travelling abroad in some cases would be indispensable to be incorporated in the curriculum.

Conclusions

The EEAP has been really impressed by the quality of the academic program, the enthusiastic dedication and the quality of teaching staff, the laboratory facilities, as well as the positive evaluation expressed by the students. However, its continuing successful delivery might become problematic without the provision of substantial resources in terms of academic positions, space, and laboratory equipment. Long-term and short-term solutions have been suggested by the EEAP, the latter looking into the offering schedule and the prerequisite vs corequisite courses, the provision of additional tutorial sessions for different courses, and most importantly, the provision of a systematic framework for students to obtain valuable practical engineering experience.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Establish the requirement for students to obtain practical engineering experience.
- Re-examine the course sequence in terms of prerequisite and corequisite course structure.
- Establish formal tutorials (i.e., outside of the lectures) in several analytical courses to assist the students to obtain the necessary knowledge on the course topic.
- Reduce the frequency of offering elective courses to once every other year / semester.
- In the longer term, reconsider the size of the program and proceed with the re-thinking and re-organization of the four concentration areas of the program.

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

There is clear evidence that student-centered learning, teaching, and assessment is a priority of the Chair and of the teaching staff of the department. The teaching staff deploy a variety of modes of delivery of the material (through lectures, lab sessions, small group projects, and electronically) that offers students the flexibility to choose the learning path that works best for each of them. When asked about the quality of instruction and the commitment of the teaching staff to their learning, the interviewed students' responses were invariably very positive. There appears to be good rapport between the student body and the teaching staff which underlines the mutual respect that characterizes their relationship. Students offered that informal, direct communications with teaching staff, either via email and in-person, are easily arranged and that their suggestions for adjustments are considered carefully.

Analysis of judgement

The students are aware of the attendance and assessment criteria for each lecture and laboratory class. Student assessment is carried out in accordance with the program's regulations, which are consistently and fairly applied to all students. Grade components and assessment methods are published in advance and are available in the courses' syllabi.

Students are encouraged to develop individual skills. In several of their classes they are asked to work with classmates in small groups and complete a project and, when completed, they

are to present their work and results. That helps them develop several “soft” skills which they will help them throughout their engineering careers: communication, teamwork, leadership, public speaking, to name a few.

Students can assess the effectiveness of teaching via course evaluation surveys conducted near the end of each semester. On average, the department teaching staff are rated as highly effective. However, the percentage of students completing these surveys is judged to range from low to extremely low (statistically meaningless). This topic was addressed during meetings with students. They suggested that to improve participation it needs to be performed during class.

All entering students are assigned an academic advisor and are made aware of an existing formal process for student appeals and complaints, along with a considerable amount of general useful information about the university, buildings, facilities, and the local area. However, it does not appear that the students are consulting with their advisors or utilizing the defined approach for appeals and/or complaints. Rather, they approach their faculty member and, in certain cases, the head of the department.

There is no formally organized tutoring program. A few faculty members offer some tutoring sessions (when they determine they are needed) but, in general, students seek out the faculty teaching the topic they need help with for assistance.

Conclusions

The EEAP found that the undergraduate program in the Department Engineering is substantially student-centered and cultivates and promotes mutual respect between the students and the faculty and staff. Students believe that they have sufficient freedom to plan their academic path and vocalize their appreciation for the support they receive from the Department, the faculty, and the administrative staff. Some small adjustments which are needed for continuous improvement can be easily applied and are to be expected in new academic programs.

The EEAP finds that the Department is in full compliance with this principle.

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

- Increase opportunities for students to gain additional hands-on experience and soft skills by including design projects to be carried out by small groups of students. Assign to such projects an appropriate portion of the course's final grade.
- Develop service-learning projects to increase the interactions of the faculty with local agencies and industry thus promoting continued collaboration.
- Increase the number of students completing course evaluation surveys by offering them the opportunity to complete them in class when present and away from class for those who are absent. Emphasize the important contribution these surveys make to the continuing improvement process.
- Identify and assist underprepared entering students with organized new optional remedial courses, tutoring, and the like, so that they become competitive in class and not interfere with the planned pace of the teaching staff's delivery of the course material. Examine the possibility of developing a placement test for all entering students to determine their knowledge level regarding basic scientific subjects.

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

The Department has developed, published, and effectively applies regulations that pertain to all aspects of students' admission, progression, recognition, and degree/certification award. The school provides an orientation day for all new students each year. The students are provided with a lot of information pertaining to their studies, academic life, the University, Department, facilities, and the surrounding community. They are also informed on how to keep themselves updated through the website and the program study guide. The program

study guide includes detailed information about the goals and structure of the program. The students are appointed an advisor who is a faculty member.

The students' progress is continuously monitored through written exams, successful completion of laboratory and practical projects, and presentation of individual or teamwork assignments. This is achieved informally through the relationship established between the advisor and the student, although this relationship and the frequency of the meetings are student led.

The program follows the ECTS credit system which is applied across the course curriculum and supports students' later recognition and certification, as well as facilitates their possible mobility. Students can select courses based on their student year (up to the authorized number of ECTS units) but first they need to register for the courses they have not completed from previous years. This could create some sequencing problems but ensures that students have the required knowledge before attending higher level courses.

Student mobility is encouraged via the ERASMUS program, although the number of participating students from this Program to date is small. The Program has hosted ERASMUS students in the past and has designated several courses that can be delivered in English. MOUs with several EU universities are in place.

Graduating students will be issued both Diplomas and Certificates in both Greek and English.

Regarding the set of quality requirements for implementation of the thesis and the thesis handbook: the most senior students in the Program entered their 4th year this Fall; therefore, the Department will be preparing everything that is required during this year.

Analysis of judgement

The Department has a well-established process for students to register and matriculate through the study program. Through the discussions, it was noted that there is a low level of lecture attendance. The EAAP addressed this with students who offered a few possible causes for that, ranging from not surprising to very serious. The first reason provided was the high quality of class notes prepared by the faculty and the availability of information electronically, such as lecture videos, material on the internet, and the like. Second, as the program admits students whose academic preparations for university studies vary significantly, students stated that teaching staff often have to deviate from the planned pace of covering the course material in order to fill gaps in the knowledge of underprepared students. That leads to absenteeism from some of the classes by the better prepared students. The students also gave a third possible reason for low class attendance, one that the Panel feels is extremely serious and requires urgent action by the appropriate University Office(s): the lack of approval (to date) for granting professional engineering status to students graduating from this program. This appears to be causing a high level of undue stress to the student body, leading to low morale and a high number of students dropping out and/or looking to transfer to other programs with approved professional engineering status.

Students can select courses based on their student year (up to the authorized number of ECTS units) but first they need to register for the courses they have not completed from previous years. Even though the intention of this is to ensure that students have the required background knowledge before attending higher level courses, it may lead to course scheduling and possible longer times to graduate. Students also identified some issues with some of the courses (prerequisites and/or corequisites) being offered at the same times that creates possible conflicts.

Conclusions

The Panel finds that the Civil Engineering Undergraduate Program at IHU has developed, published, and is fully committed to managing, administering, and applying all regulations that pertain to all aspects of students' admission, progression, recognition, and degree/certification award. The Chair, teaching staff, and administrative staff have worked tirelessly and effectively during a very difficult transition period and are to be commended for bringing this new program forward in an exceptional manner.

The EEAP finds the Department in full compliance with this principle and offers certain recommendations for continuous improvement.

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

- Clarify the graduates' professional engineering status as soon as feasible. This is deemed imperative for boosting the morale of present students and attracting future ones.
- Increase opportunities for students to gain more hands-on experience via design projects, increased laboratory engagement, service-learning, and the like, and motivate broader participation by assigning to such activities a commensurate portion of the course grade.
- Engage local public and private organizations which may be interested in offering opportunities for practical training to the students.
- Encourage students to take advantage of the ERASMUS or other relevant programs.

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 5-year Civil Engineering program is served by 11 faculty members (currently 9 – two retired this past year, one has been replaced but has not started yet, the other is still pending). All faculty members have graduate degrees – most have Ph.D. and are eager to carry out research. The faculty members have different ranks ranging from Lecturer to Professor and, despite their heavy teaching load (on average 4 courses per year) and remarkable service load cover all teaching needs of the program supported only by 2 instructors and 2 technical personnel. Additional specialty courses are taught by part-timers appointed on contracts. Furthermore, these academics are also responsible for managing the semester examinations of students registered in the previous technical program (TEI), although this additional duty will be phased out in the next few years. All teaching staff are extremely committed and enthusiastic about their academic activities, have an excellent relationship with the students and show significant interest in research programs and activities – some have an excellent research record in terms of funding and publications. There are also limited opportunities for continuing education and professional development but again, faculty are keen to utilize them for their benefit. Furthermore, the quality of teaching is generally excellent regardless of their different teaching

styles as noticed by the students interviewed by the EEAP. With all these findings, the Civil Engineering program of IHU deems to be fully compliant with the requirements of Principle 3.

Analysis of judgment

Notwithstanding all positive findings and the heroic attempts of the teaching staff to produce high quality teaching and research output, the EEAP has concerns regarding the sustainability of this teaching effort given the small size of the permanent teaching staff and the broadness of the program in its current form with four concentrations to be offered to all students every year. This issue has been analysed further in this report and appropriate recommendations regarding the long-term and short-term development of the program have already been made. In short, a flexible strategic plan considering different possible scenarios has been recommended to be developed with the participation of all stakeholders including external members from the public and private sector to ensure that the students' needs in the field are covered by the teaching offered to them. Another issue regarding the limited student participation in completing the course evaluation questionnaires has already been mentioned previously in discussing Principle 2 and will not be repeated here. Finally, filling out the approved faculty positions must be accelerated and reducing the inherent bureaucracy of the existing processes (e.g., purchasing computers and ensuring adequate computational power are some examples) should be a very high priority item in the list of decision makers. Since various recommendations on these issues have already been made, the analysis of this principle will not include any further recommendations.

Conclusions

The EEAP has found that the program is fully compliant with this principle. No further recommendations are necessary, since all comments have already been covered in other areas of this report.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

None.

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 been allocated excellent facilities which allow it to adequately support its academic mission. There is an adequate number of fully equipped classrooms and amphitheatres, library, teleconferencing and e-Learning facilities. Available IT support also appears to be adequate. Most areas are accessible by students with disabilities. It appears that overall, the facilities are distributed rationally.

There is a variety of support services available to the students and they are all listed on the Department's web site including sport and cultural facilities. Career counselling is provided by each student's faculty advisor. All entering students are assigned an advisor during their first semester on campus. Students are also informed about all available services during their first semester.

There are very few boarding facilities allotted to the Department, but their number is very small for accommodating program students.

Analysis of judgement

Overall, there are adequate facilities for the Department to carry out its academic mission. As noted above, the number of faculty is low for the number of course offerings and this requires a revision of the program and adjustment of course offerings and frequency. There is also a need for additional administrative staff specially to deal with the large student body size, mainly due to continued TEI students.

Although there were no complaints from the students interviewed, it was evident that the faculty is carrying a heavier than normal administrative load.

There is a need for additional technical support staff for the laboratories, and adequate resources for the needed maintenance and periodic modernization/update of laboratory equipment, laptop computers, and the like.

Conclusions

The EAAP found that the Department has been provided with sufficient and well-equipped facilities to ensure a high-quality teaching and learning environment for the new undergraduate program. The EEAP finds that the Department is in full compliance with the principle.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Plan and secure resources for required maintenance and update of facilities and laboratories which is essential for continued adequate support of students' learning and for the expansion of research activities.
- Increase the Department's administrative support to relieve faculty members from currently excessive administrative load.

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 institution offers online platforms to collect and present data. The Department has in place an electronic system to monitor the student progressing system. Students can track their progress easily and request basic certificates online. Course feedback is collected at the end of each semester through a questionnaire that assesses the teaching staff, their teaching methodology and materials used, the effort they put and the level of course difficulty. These are conducted and analysed by the MODIP, and the teaching staff can access the results for their course after the posting of the grades.

The course evaluation is completed and summarized by semester. MODIP collects the annual reports from the Department's Internal Evaluation Committee and discusses the weaknesses and the improvement of the program with the Department.

Analysis of judgement

The meetings with students and faculty provided ample evidence that the staff members were open to constructive criticism obtained from the questionnaires. The results and comments are seriously considered and are implemented the following year. This builds a continuous improvement process for the course delivery.

It was also emphasized that a very small percentage of the student body participate in these course evaluations. This was mainly attributed to the fact that the evaluations are completed outside of the classroom and as such most students disregard them. Changing the timing of the evaluations, e.g., in class, could increase the response rate. Moreover, students stated that

are comfortable addressing their concerns and criticism face to face with the faculty since they feel that this is more direct.

Conclusion

The institution has established the appropriate procedures to collect and analyse the available data with the intention to ensure its proper function and growth. The EAAP finds the Department in full compliance with this principle. Efforts to increase response rate of the course evaluations are recommended.

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

Improve participation rates in course evaluation surveys by conducting them in the classroom during lecture times.

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 Department's website is well indexed and easily provides the basic information that might be needed. The school's history, research and curriculum are accessible in both Greek and English, while staff details, university structure, course articles, news and events are only in Greek.

The main website of IHU is outdated and does not provide any relevant information about the newly established departments.

Videos uploaded to YouTube are very informative and provide a good introduction and overview of the campus and its buildings.

Analysis of judgement

The site is well designed and easy to navigate but there are key elements that are missing, e.g., a guide for new students. The discussions revealed that the Department Chair developed the webpage, and he is also responsible for updating it. The site is scheduled to be complete soon and increase information in both English and Greek.

Conclusions

The Department has an adequate amount of information available to the public, unlike the IHU main website. The EEAP finds the Department in substantial compliance with the principle. However, it encourages the Department to continue its efforts to update the website soon. Short descriptions for each research effort would be beneficial and informative to entice information-seekers and provide them with relevant information.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Encourage the full expansion of the Department's web page in English especially for the laboratories and the student guide.
- Secure resources and appropriate expertise for keeping the Department's web page current.

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

There is a regular monitoring effort facilitated through the collection of annual data by the Department that is then reviewed by the IHU MODIP (attachment B15). The most recent review has identified a set of strengths and weaknesses of the Department along with a list of suggested proactive actions. The strengths include the formation of a modern program, the faculty efforts in delivering the educational component of the program, the faculty initiatives for revising the curriculum, and ability of faculty to adjust to new teaching forms. The weaknesses include the large number of students not passing their exams, the low attendance rates of lectures, and the low numbers of students selecting the Department as one of their choices after their entry exams. The possible actions include a systematic effort to hire new faculty, greater emphasis in monitoring student progress, promote the importance of attending lectures, and increased efforts in defining the professional engineering status.

The course evaluations are on par with other similar surveys and cover adequately the various aspects of the course as well as other academic activities. Summaries that are provided to the faculty with the results of these evaluations have been provided as part of the Department presentations. The discussions with faculty indicated the low response rate of the course evaluations.

Analysis of judgement

The internal review of the Department indicates that there is an effort to revisit the program and modernize it to reflect current scientific trends while adjusting it to address the realistic abilities of the program, the issues of the background levels of the students, and changing societal needs. There are efforts to address these issues, but they seem to be impeded by the response rate of the evaluations. Even though the faculty indicated that they revisit the course offerings before the semester starts, there was no systematic planning or efforts to address this and revise the study program accordingly.

Students have indicated that there is familial relationship between them, and the faculty and they feel comfortable discussing course aspects and problems with them directly. Several students and some faculty indicated that this approach may be desirable and more effective. However, in instances where study program changes are needed, a more structured and data-driven approach may be more efficient.

There is a need for systematic and continuous review of the study program to ensure that the Department respond to the challenges at hand and identifies actionable paths to ensure that it develops its identity. In this respect, it is recommended that the Department develop a questionnaire to be distributed to industry and public agencies to identify new trends and evolving market needs of the industry.

The Department should consider the development of an Advisory Board to seek the input of employers and professional associations to ensure an updated view of the profession and develop graduates that are better prepared to enter the workforce. The Board would work with the Department to provide feedback on educational and market aspects.

The Department should consider the development of a survey of its graduates after AY 2024-2025 to obtain a program evaluation and identify potential areas of improvement. This would provide an opportunity to students to reflect on their knowledge gained and identify potential areas of changes.

Conclusions

The EEAP finds the Department fully compliant with this principle. It is recommended that the faculty review the current course offerings and the number of concentration areas, develop a survey for local agencies and industry to gauge how to improve the program, and establish an Advisory Board to help the program improvement.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Complete the course evaluations in class during lectures.
- Consider developing a separate questionnaire for graduating students to be conducted in the 10th semester to collect information regarding their perspectives of the program and the Department.
- Develop a survey targeting public and private sectors regarding required skills and knowledge of graduates as well as the impact of the Department and its research on the local society.
- Establish an Advisory Board to help the Department in improving the program.

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 external evaluation that is conducted for the Department. As such there are no prior recommendations to be followed. The Department has in place a process for reviewing the findings and recommendations of such external evaluations. This includes a preliminary review by the Chair and notification of the evaluation to all faculty and staff for their review. A faculty meeting is scheduled to discuss the findings and recommendations and identify next steps of action. Ad hoc committees are developed to suggest actions that are discussed in subsequent faculty meetings.

The Department has reviewed the IHU accreditation report and attempted to incorporate them in their internal evaluation. These recommendations and incorporation in their processes include the compliance with the MODIP requirement of developing electronic student records, the development of strategic goals and the policy for quality control, and the inclusion of English version of the quality control policy in the Department webpage. The Department has not fully addressed the low response rate of the course evaluations and is promised to continue its efforts to increase this rate.

Analysis of judgement

This is the first external evaluation of the Department and as such there is no track record of prior recommendations to be followed. The discussions with the faculty indicated that they understand and value the importance of such external reviews, they are receptive to recommendations to improve their program and they showed an attitude of adapting to such suggestions.

Given that the present evaluation takes place at the time that there have not been any graduates for the program yet, the EAAP suggests that the second external evaluation take place after the first graduating class.

Conclusions

The EAAP evaluated this principle based on the eagerness and willingness of the faculty to comply with recommendations. Based on these criteria, the EAAP finds the Department fully compliant with the principle. It also recommends that another external evaluation is conducted in AY 2025-2026 after the Department has graduated its first class and these students.

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

Conduct another external evaluation in AY 2025-2026 to better assess the study program and evaluate the level of competency and skill of the first class of graduates.

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

The Department has developed a plan to transition from its former 4-year program to a 5-year Civil Engineering degree. The plan allowed for the student who have entered as TEI candidates to continue and complete their studies under the original study plan. The last year for these students when courses were offered was AY 2021-2022 and the last courses offered in the Fall semester of the year. The graduates are given the option to continue their studies in the new program by registering for 21 additional courses and graduating as a Civil Engineer. Apparently, there are many students who have not graduated, and they can participate in the exams and complete their degree. The faculty will continue to support the earlier educational requirements beyond simply scheduling exams including thesis supervision, completion of practical training, and overall student advising. For all courses in the old study program, there is a corresponding course in the new program that students from the old program can attend. It should be noted that these new courses have a greater content to address the higher

educational goals of the new program. The Department indicated that there were 1,482 students registered in AY 2019-2020 and since then about 100 of them have graduated.

The Department does not foresee any significant actual costs for addressing this transition, since the termination of the courses offered in AY 2022-2023 will eliminate the need for increased teaching. However, the fact that exams need to be scheduled for these students at all possible exam periods creates a disproportional load for the faculty since they need to set up exams and grade them as well as supervise additional theses and their practical training. The anticipated reduction in student numbers through the automatic removal from the registry over the coming years could provide some relief. The last group of students entered the TEI are required to complete their studies by the end of AY 2026-2027 while students who entered before must complete their studies in AY 2024-2025.

The Department has provided the required documentation for the staff involved in the transition, the detailed courses that they are responsible, the governing regulations for the old study program and its degree, and the approval and support of the MODIP for the proposed transition plan.

Analysis of judgement

The Department is commendable for their efforts to accommodate students that are already in their program and attempting to graduate with the old degree. They have made every effort to ensure a smooth transition and they have developed a path for the students to enrol in the new program and graduate with a new degree. The faculty also indicated that they have not had a single student expressing a desire to continue their degree and they attributed this to the increased load of courses as well as to the uncertainty of the professional engineering status afforded with the new degree.

Even though there will be no new offerings of the old program courses, the fact remains that there is the potential for approximately 1,350 students to show up in exams or requiring the completion of their practical training and thesis which will create an immense workload for the current faculty. However, this will be very unlikely to occur since only a limited number of the previous program students participate in the exams. The Department indicated that there is no “real” cost associated with this, but the additional workload will only hamper the teaching and research responsibilities of the faculty. The new law requiring the removal of students from the registry will be a significant help on this front and will trim the number of the students down to only those really desiring to complete their degree.

Conclusions

The EAAP has been really impressed with the efforts and time that the faculty devote during this transition to aid students in completing their degrees. The EAAP finds the Department fully compliant with this principle and it has no further suggestions.

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

Consider contacting the previous program students to inform them about the deadlines for graduating.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

The Department has demonstrated a series of good practices during the virtual onsite visit and documentation provided. These practices reflecting the major strengths of the program include:

- A study program that has been thoughtfully designed following the programs of other universities to provide a strong core and significant technical options to students through the four concentration sectors within civil engineering.
- A faculty body that is dedicated to the teaching program and works tirelessly to deliver a quality program and educate students providing them with a first-class education despite their resource limitations.
- A faculty body that delivers a large number of courses and trying their best to accomplish this.
- A faculty body that develops a commendable research production and they have managed to do this despite their teaching and administrative loads.
- A faculty body that students can access immediately, frequently, and continuously to address concerns and course questions.
- An excellent infrastructure appropriate and adequate to deliver the program and well-equipped labs for academic activities.

II. Areas of Weakness

The Department is also facing several issues that do not allow it to fully reach its capabilities. These areas include:

- A study program with a wide breadth requiring a revision of its appropriateness at present considering the faculty size and student numbers.
- Lack of sufficient faculty numbers to support the program and the excessive workload of the current staff that affects their research productivity.
- The lack of professional engineering status for the program graduates is a detriment to the program and a significant concern to the students entering the program.
- Inadequate resources to equip the lab facilities for research and as means for addressing external work requests.
- Lack of organized remedial courses to address students coming from educational systems that do not fully prepare students for the rigors of the university courses.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

The EEAP is very pleased with the overall performance of the Department and the qualifications of its faculty and staff to accomplish the required educational goals and research objectives. The following suggestions could simply serve as tools and instruments for the continuous improvement and the fulfilment of the long-term goals of the Department. These suggestions have been developed after a thorough review of the recommendations developed for each principle. Therefore, the EEAP proposes the following **final recommendations** as follow-up actions:

- Develop a mid-range strategic plan that could address the immediate needs of the Department and develop a plan that would prioritize the future faculty, technical support, and administrative hires to build critical mass in each of the concentration areas offered by the Department.
- Intensify efforts to secure professional engineering status for the graduating students.
- Enhance the laboratories to promote faculty research as well as potentially become funding sources for external work. This would create the opportunity to establish a distinguishing niche for the Department not available in other Civil Engineering programs.
- Review the breadth and course offerings of the study program along with their scheduling and consider revising them to:
 - a. identify courses that can be combined and/or consolidated;
 - b. revisit the frequency of course offerings;
 - c. reconsider the number of electives offered; and
 - d. review the sequence and relationship between prerequisites and corequisites.
- Consider offering organized remedial courses for students coming from educational systems that may not fully prepare them for the rigors of the university courses.
- Consider the incorporation of practical training as part of the study program and increase opportunities for students to gain additional hands-on experience and soft skills by including design projects to be carried out by small groups of students.
- Engage local agencies—public and private—to identify issues and create opportunities for service learning that faculty and students working together can tackle.
- Increase student participation rates in the course evaluation process by considering in class completion of the questionnaires, publishing their analysed results (to whatever extent allowed).
- Develop a specific questionnaire for graduating students to be conducted in the 10th semester to collect information regarding their perspectives of the program and the Department.
- Establish an **External Advisory Board** as a consultative body to the Department with members from industry and other organizations (stakeholders), who would advise the Department regarding issues such as:
 - a. emerging areas of priority to incorporate in the curriculum;
 - b. marketability and the continuous improvement of the graduates; and
 - c. other areas regarding the mid-range strategic plan, the graduating students' questionnaire and others.
- Encourage the full expansion of the Department's web page in English especially for the laboratories and the student guide and keep the web page current.
- Consider contacting the previous program students to inform them about the deadlines for graduating.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: **1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, and 12.**

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **9.**

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

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

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

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname

Signature

1. Professor Nikiforos Stamatiadis (Chair)

University of Kentucky, USA

2. Professor Theodore Stathopoulos

Concordia University, Canada

3. Professor Emeritus George Haritos

The University of Akron, USA

4. Mr. Eleftherios Avramidis

Technical Chamber of Greece, Greece

5. Ms. Georgia Tsafaridou

Democritus University of Thrace, Greece