



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



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

Computer, Informatics, and Telecommunications Engineering

Institution: International Hellenic University

Date: 10 June 2023



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



Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the New Undergraduate Study Programme in operation of **Computer, Informatics and Telecommunications 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 **Computer, Informatics, and Telecommunications 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. Prof. Nicolas Tsapatsoulis (Chair)**
Cyprus University of Technology, Limassol, Cyprus

- 2. Prof. Costas Iliopoulos**
King's College London, London, United Kingdom

- 3. Prof. Emeritus Nicolas Spyrtos**
Université Paris-Saclay, Paris, France

- 4. Mr Nikolaos Siadimas**
Technical Chamber of Greece, Athens, Greece

- 5. Mr Georgios-Nikiforos Avgoustidis**
Computer Science & Engineering, University of Ioannina, Ioannina, Greece (student)

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

The panel members, conducted their evaluation and wrote the current report based on the:

- (1) submitted, by the Department of Computer, Informatics and Telecommunications Engineering, material
- (2) meetings with the (a) Vice Rector and the Head of the Department (b) OMEA & MODIP representatives, (c) students, (d) teaching staff, (e) employers & social partners
- (3) virtual tour video prepared by the Department
- (4) standards for Quality Accreditation of New Undergraduate Programmes in Operation
- (5) guidelines by HAHE

On May 24, 2023, the External Evaluation and Accreditation Panel (EEAP) received electronic access to the relevant accreditation proposal and support material from HAHE. On May 26, 2023, Dr. C. Besta, on behalf of HAHE, conducted orientation and virtual training over Zoom for the panel members.

On Tuesday, June 6, 2023, the EEAP members virtually met over Zoom. During that meeting the proposal report was discussed. In addition, the allocation of tasks for the panel members was made and questions for clarifications were discussed. At 14:30 on the same day, a teleconference with the Vice-Rector/President of MODIP, Prof. Kalliopi Makridou, and the Head of the Department, Prof. Dimitrios Varsamis took place. During that meeting an overview of the UGP was presented to the EEAP members and UGP's strengths and possible areas of concern were discussed. A teleconference with OMEA & MODIP representatives followed. On behalf of OMEA & MODIP the following were present: (1) Prof. Hristos Anastassiou, (OMEA Member), (2) Prof. Ioannis Kalomiros (OMEA Member), (3) Prof. Athanasios Nikolaidis (OMEA Member) (4) Assist. Professor Anastasios Politis (OMEA Member), (5) Prof. Vasiliki Vrana (MODIP Member), (6) Ms. Maria Tsantouka (MODIP Staff). During this meeting the degree of compliance of the UGP to the Quality Standards for Accreditation was presented. A review of student assignments, theses, exam papers & examination material were also discussed.

The day was concluded with a debriefing of EEAP members in a private Zoom meeting. There, the panel members reflected on impressions and prepared for the second day of the on-line review.

On Wednesday, June 7, 2023, the day started with a teleconference with UGP students to assess their satisfaction from their study experience and Department/Institution facilities, verify student input in quality assurance and identify priority issues concerning student life and welfare.

A teleconference with teaching staff followed in which the following faculty members were present: (1) Prof. Constantinos Hilas (Deputy Head of Department), (2) Prof. Spyridon Kazarlis, (3) Prof. Anastasios Papatsoris, (4) Prof. Charalampos Strouthopoulos, (5) Prof. Stylianos Tsitsos, (6) Assoc. Prof. Dimitrios Efstathiou, (7) Assoc. Prof. Alkiviadis Tsimpiris, (8) Assoc. Prof. Stavros Vologiannidis, (9) Assist. Prof. Stylianos Basagiannis, (10) Assist. Prof. Ioannis

Vourvoulakis, and (11) Lecturer Evangelos Outsios. During that meeting professional development opportunities, staff mobility, staff workload, student evaluations, competence and adequacy of the teaching staff to ensure learning outcomes, links between teaching and research, teaching staff's involvement in applied research, projects and research activities directly related to the UGP and possible areas of weakness were discussed.

An on-line tour in classrooms, lecture halls, libraries, laboratories, and other facilities took place next to evaluate facilities and learning resources and to ascertain that the learning materials, equipment and facilities are adequate for a successful provision of the programme. The video produced for this purpose can be accessed via the following link: <http://ict.ihu.gr/en/videos-2>.

A teleconference with employers/social partners to discuss relations of the Department with external stakeholders from the private and the public sector took place on June 7, 2023, at 15:00. The following were present: (1) Mr. Panayiotis Spyropoulos (Deputy Regional Governor), (2) Mr. Alexandros Chrysafis (Mayor of Serres City), (3) Mr. Athanasios Malliaras, President of Serres Chamber of Commerce, (4) Mr. Georgios Kourtidis (CEO of NEKTAR SA), (5) Mr. Antonios Natsikas (CEO of NATSIKAS SME), (6) Ms. Eleni Tsipa (Oracle Academy), (7) Mr. Tasos Rontzis (CEO and Founder of ONSET Company), (8) Mr. Hermann Semeloglou (Founder of @skg.education Company), (9) Mr. Ioannis Tsolakidis (OFYPEKA), (10) Mr. Anastasios Timotheidis (President of Hellenic Mathematical Society - Serres).

Following the meeting with the external stakeholders the EEAP members had a short private zoom meeting to discuss the outcomes of the on-line reviews.

The final meeting was a teleconference with OMEA & MODIP representatives and EEAP to discuss several points/findings which required further clarification. The following OMEA & MODIP members were present: (1) Prof. Hristos Anastassiu, (OMEA Member), (2) Prof. Ioannis Kalomiros (OMEA Member), (3) Prof. Athanasios Nikolaidis (OMEA Member) (4) Assist. Professor Anastasios Politis (OMEA Member), (5) Prof. Vasiliki Vrana (MODIP Member), (6) Ms. Maria Tsantouka (MODIP Staff).

A closing meeting with the Vice-Rector/President of MODIP, the Head of the Department, and the OMEA & MODIP members that participated in the previous section took place on June 7, 2023, at 17:00. There, the EEAP made an informal presentation of the key findings of the review and received the feedback from the institution for that.

III. New Undergraduate Study Programme in operation Profile

The International Hellenic University (IHU) based in Thessaloniki, was founded by the article 1 of Law 3391/2005 (Government Gazette 240/A'/2005) and is organized and operates as a Higher Educational Institute (HEI) in the university sector. With Law 4610/2019 (Government Gazette 70/A'/7-5-2019) seven (7) Schools were established therein with corresponding Departments in each of them. Additionally, there is a University Centre for International Studies in IHU, based in Thessaloniki, which operates as an academic unit of the institution.

The UGP is offered by the Department of Computer, Informatics and Telecommunications Engineering, which is one of the seven Departments of the School of Engineering. The Department is located in the Serres campus along with several other Departments of IHU (three of them belong also to the School of Engineering).

The Serres campus spans an area of 25 hectares to the south-east of the city of Serres. The complex consists of the following buildings:

1. Two buildings with classrooms and four amphitheatres (Buildings A, B)
2. Four workshop buildings with two amphitheatres and educational staff offices (Buildings Γ, Δ, E, H)
3. Complex of buildings of Department of Informatics, Computers & Telecommunications and Department of Surveying & Geoinformatics (Building Σ)
4. An Administration building where Registrar offices of the departments as well as University Administrative Services (Building K) are housed
5. Library (Building M)
6. Gym, properly equipped (Building Δ)
7. Conference Centre with two auditoria and one conference room (Building Λ)
8. Open-air 1000-seat auditorium (Building Π)
9. Multipurpose building (Building O)
10. Student club (Building N)
11. Canteen (Building Π)

The Department of Computer, Informatics and Telecommunications Engineering features classrooms and laboratory spaces in the northern wing of building Σ while additional classrooms are also located in building B. The offices of the faculty and technical staff of the Department are in building Σ, while the office of the Registrar is located in building K.

The new 5-year UGP on Computer, Informatics and Telecommunications Engineering of the International Hellenic University was founded in July 2019 (Government Gazette 2657/B'/1-7-2019.). It is an up-to-date programme and follows international practice in the field. It makes extended use of the experience collected during the operation of the previous 4-year UGP on Informatics and Telecommunications.

The programme¹ includes courses corresponding to at least 300 credit points (ECTS), typically lasts five (5) academic years and is currently completed with the award of a Level 6 degree. The design of the UGP covers the requirements of a Level 7 Diploma (integrated master) and

¹http://ict.ihu.gr/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/%CE%95english_Academic_Guide_2023_2024_final.pdf

the Department is seeking and claiming the issuance of a relevant governmental decision having submitted a request in this direction.

The curriculum provides graduates with skills enabling them to be involved in study, design, analysis, construction, construction and operation supervision, assessment, maintenance, expert and certification of standards in the fields of: (a) computers; (b) telecommunications, telecommunications systems and computer networks; (c) computer and information systems; and (d) systems for automation, signal processing, image and sound processing, speech.

The graduate engineers of the Department can be employed in the private and public sector, based on their specialised scientific and technological knowledge, either in self-reliance or in cooperation with other scientists/engineers, in the fields of development and maintenance of hardware systems, development and maintenance of software systems, and design/management of electronic communications systems and services.

In terms of specific competencies, a graduate will be able, as a professional, to deal with:

- Small- and large-scale programming, system programming, development of software systems and databases, creation of user – software interfaces, ergonomic systems design, production of image analysis and synthesis software, design and installation of smart systems. Setting up real-time systems and controlled availability and security.
- Design, management and security of electronic communications networks and services, installation of communication software, communication resource management, installation of mobile computing systems, mobile computing resources management.
- Design, implementation, installation, maintenance and management of telecommunications facilities, networks and systems.
- Design, development, installation and maintenance of computer peripherals, embedded systems, complex sensor systems. Integrated circuits design and programming, computational systems design. Design, implementation, installation and maintenance of computer-supported industrial systems and production system software.

The UGP is divided into 10 academic semesters (which is the minimum duration of studies to award the degree), nine (9) instructional and the final one (1) that includes the preparation of a Diploma Thesis. The maximum duration of studies is 16 academic semesters. After the completion of the maximum period of study, the Board of Directors of the Department issues an act of deregistration (article 76, par. 1, Law 4957/2022).

Students who have not exceeded the upper limit of studies may, after applying to the Department Office of the Registrar, interrupt their studies for a period that does not exceed two (2) years. The right to interrupt studies may be exercised once or partially for a period of at least one (1) academic semester, but the duration of the interruption may not cumulatively exceed two (2) years, in case it is partially provided. Student status is suspended during the interruption of studies and participation in any educational process is not allowed (article 76, par. 4, Law 4957/2022).

The Curriculum supports 72 courses, 40 are mandatory core courses, 27 are compulsory electives and 5 are free electives. In the last (10th) semester students are required to author a thesis, while they can optionally choose to carry out an Internship in Industry. In order to obtain the degree, students must successfully pass 54 courses and complete their Diploma Thesis. Each UGP course is assigned a number of ECTS; the number of credits allocated to each course is a measure of the workload required by a student to meet course objectives.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

b. The strategy of the Institution for its academic development

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

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

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

- *the needs of the national and regional economy (economic sectors, employment, supply-demand, expected academic and professional qualifications)*
- *comparison with other national and international study programmes of the same scientific field*
- *the state-of-the-art developments*
- *the existing academic map; the differentiation of the proposed department from the already existing ones needs to be analysed, in addition to the implications of the current image of the academic map in the specific scientific field.*

d. The documentation of the sustainability of the new department

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

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

e. The structure of studies

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

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

f. The number of admitted students

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

g. Postgraduate studies and research

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

Relevant documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

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

The Department of Computer, Informatics and Telecommunications Engineering (hereafter CITE) has a clear mission to educate the next generation of Computer and Telecommunication Engineers in accordance with the international standards and the Greek government

definitions. The scientific fields of the department are clearly included in the internationally established scientific fields of Higher Education.

It is advisable however that a clear mission beyond the one defined by law, unique to the department, which highlights its excellence, is formulated, and published consistently in its documents and on the Web.

b. The strategy of the Institution for its academic development

The strategy of the institution for its academic development is described in the submitted documents. The strategic plan is a thorough one although an overall branding policy is missing. Analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats have been conducted. However, it is quite generic and does not provide the necessary details to form a specific action plan towards achieving the strategic goals of the institution.

The strategic plan of the Department aims to achieve excellence in education, promote research, implement digital transformation, and improve the academic environment. The department has accountability and transparency in all processes and has a sustainable quality assurance framework. It is a good practice that the strategic plan contains specific goals, the respective actions to be completed and monitored for the success of the Department. The rationale for selecting the scientific field of the Department is justified with very reasonable arguments as well. The Department founders and faculty have demonstrated their vision and knowledge of the technological developments in the field Computer and Telecommunication Engineering as well as in the field of Informatics.

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

The documentation provided clearly describes the feasibility of the operation of the department and the study program. The national needs of Computer and Telecommunication Engineers have been well documented. Informatics, telecommunication, and robotics is where the Department is focusing its efforts on. These are wisely chosen as they are responsive to national and international needs.

The Greek state showed full support of the transformation of the TEI programs to a 5-year University level integrated masters programs. For this, suitable laws were passed and respective funding in support of the new programs became available. Funds for teaching and laboratory equipment were made available. In addition, the faculty and the research labs have a strong presence in receiving highly competitive research funds.

During the interviews with the stakeholders the panel verified that they are actively engaged with research projects, education, and training of the students as well as continued training in new technologies of the employed engineers and technicians.

The department faculty pursue state of the art research in emerging areas.

d. The documentation of the sustainability of the new department

The capacity of the department is around 90 students whereas they receive around 150 every year. However, the number of outgoing students (transfers to other institutions in larger cities) is between 50 and 60 and this brings the actual number of students in the department to the actual number the Department declares to the Ministry. However, as the department grows the number of outgoing students might become a key issue that should be attended to by the department.

e. The structure of studies

The study program is designed to last for 5 years divided in 10 semesters. During the first three years most of the core courses are mandatory. The last two years have mainly elective courses the students can select to take for their specialisation. The studies conclude with the 10th semester solidly dedicated to the Diploma Thesis. A total of about 54 courses are required for graduation. The course credit allocation is in alignment with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). Each course carries allotted ECTS units that they need to add to a minimum of 300 ECTS. The Diploma Thesis carries 30 ECTS. There is the option to do practical training with the industry.

The students have assigned advisors who help them navigate the University system. Teaching happens in classrooms and in laboratories. There is an e-class system where the students can find the assigned reading and homework for each class. The hands-on laboratory approach inherited by the preceding TEI gives the students an advantage in becoming useful engineers. The students fill a satisfaction questionnaire for all classes with good participation numbers. The results of the questionnaires are processed by OMEA and MODIP. Indications are that appropriate actions are taking place to remedy identified issues. The student-centred learning approach, however, needs re-evaluation.

The study program is well designed to gradually teach the student into becoming a knowledgeable electrical and electronic engineer.

f. The number of admitted students.

The Department reported that between 2019 and 2022 the annual number of admitted students was about 150 per year entering the UGP from the nationwide entrance exams. Student outgoing transfers reduce this number to about 95 active students per year. This is close to the number of students that the Department proposes to the ministry and guarantees that the UGP can run smoothly and effectively. However, given the attraction of students by larger cities, it might be difficult for the department to keep the number of active students at reasonable levels in the future.

g. Postgraduate studies and research

The department has put in place graduate studies and labs devoted to graduate students. Some of the faculty members already supervise graduate students. Given that the department started operating in its current form only since 2019, the development of graduate studies should be supported and encouraged.

ii. Analysis

The organisation of UGP's curriculum is good and well-aligned with the latest curricula offered internationally. The UGP builds on and streamlines the previous UGP offered by the two TEI whose upper division specialisation was focused on CS. The job market for UGT's graduates is strong and companies seek its graduates even before they finish their studies. The department has established strong connections with several Greek and multi-national companies with offices in Serres and the greater Greece and leverages these connections to help its students further improve their employment opportunities and to inform changes in the curriculum design. However, the relations with external stakeholders remain mostly ad-hoc. They should be better organized probably by the establishment of an advisory board and the creation of an alumni association. Finally, for its development, the department should be proactive and collaborate with local initiatives such as the development of a technological park around the activities of the local chamber of commerce.

III. Conclusions

CITE is a very young and dynamic department with a research active faculty. Some weak points were identified related to its quality assurance policy and the strategic planning, which need to be attended by the Chair, the OMEA and the General Assembly of the Department (see also the recommendations below).

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	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
c. The documentation of the feasibility of the operation of the department and the study programme	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
d. The documentation of the sustainability of the new department	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
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 institution must develop a realistic strategic plan for its academic development focusing on the optimal utilisation of resources and infrastructure. Collaboration with the chamber of commerce to develop a technological park should be seen as a priority.
- The increased number of outgoing student transfers is a possible threat for the sustainability of the Department and must be seen as such. Although a definite solution to this problem does not seem to be feasible (and practically it is outside the Departments' control) measures to limit it as much as possible must be taken.
- A clear mission beyond the one defined by law, unique to the CITE department that highlights its excellence could be formulated and published consistently in its documents and on the Web.

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 (B6 Πολιτική Ποιότητας ΔΙΠΑΕ)*
- *Quality Assurance Policy of the academic unit (B7 Πολιτική Ποιότητας ΜΠΥΤ.pdf)*
- *Quality target setting of the Institution and the academic unit (utilising the S.M.A.R.T. methodology) (B8 Στοχοθεσία Ποιότητας ΔΙΠΑΕ για το 2023.pdf)*
- *Quality Assurance Goals for the UGP (B9 Στοχοθεσία Ποιότητας ΠΠΣ.pdf)*
- *Standards for Quality Accreditation of Undergraduate Programmes*
- *Section 2 of the submitted proposal for accreditation (B1 Πρόταση Πιστοποίησης ΤΜΠΥΤ.pdf)*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The quality assurance policy of the Department incorporates necessary procedures to ensure a well-structured and organized curriculum, aligned with European and national standards, while achieving the intended learning outcomes and professional qualifications. The implementation of this policy involves utilizing the Quality Manual of the Internal Quality Assurance System of the International Hellenic University. Additionally, the Undergraduate Curriculum undergoes periodic external evaluation by committees of independent experts through certification procedures organized by the Hellenic Authority for Higher Education.

Concerning the implementation of the quality assurance policy, the EEAP has identified the following aspects related to the Undergraduate Curriculum (UGP):

1. External stakeholders and graduates are not currently involved in the curriculum evaluation process. Nevertheless, the School has appointed an external Advisory Board, which can provide valuable assistance in reviewing the UGP.
2. The UGP fully aligns with the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education. The course syllabi adhere to a standardized template that is compatible with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). The Chair of the Department and the relevant members review the syllabi.
3. The primary method to evaluate the quality of teaching is through student questionnaires for each module. However, there is a lack of established measures to address deviations from expected quality.
4. The qualifications of faculty and teaching staff are ensured through open and merit-based recruitment, evaluation, and promotion in accordance with national law.
5. The Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) emphasizes promoting quality in research work while encouraging the pursuit of competitive grants, awards, and distinctions at the international level.
6. The interconnection of teaching, research, and innovation is fostered through students' access to teaching and research labs and by promoting research-targeted diploma theses. Of course, the latter remains to be seen since no diploma theses were given / concluded so far (the UGP started on 2019).
7. The quality assurance policy does not explicitly ensure that the qualifications acquired by UGP graduates meet the demands of the Greek and international job markets. Involving graduates and external stakeholders, such as employers, in an annual curriculum evaluation could contribute to addressing this concern. In addition to that surveys could be conducted, by the Liaison and Career Office in a regular basis. This role of Liaison and Career Office should be defined in the IQAS and the Quality Manual.
8. There is no clear provision within the IQAS for formal evaluation of support services, including administrative services, the library, and the student welfare office, by students. Establishing evaluation processes for these services is essential to ensure a top-level study experience for students.

II. Analysis

The Internal Evaluation Committee (OMEA), in collaboration with the University's Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP), assumes the responsibility of overseeing the quality assurance processes within the Department and evaluating the effectiveness of the entire academic provision. The General Assembly of the Department, in conjunction with the Chair, holds overall accountability for reviewing the UGP and ensuring its compliance with institutional Quality Assurance standards.

To gather student feedback, UGP undergoes scrutiny through student evaluation questionnaires at the end of each semester for every course. Furthermore, students will be

given a comprehensive questionnaire upon completion of their studies. However, it was observed during meetings with external stakeholders there is no formal or informal role for them in the IQAs for assessing the curriculum.

On a positive note, students expressed that their qualitative feedback and comments in the questionnaires are taken seriously, and appropriate measures are implemented whenever possible. Additionally, faculty members are actively engaged in research and strive to integrate their research findings into their teaching practices.

III. Conclusions

The evaluation of the UGP has revealed certain weaknesses in the quality assurance policy. These issues require the attention of the Chair, the OMEA, and the General Assembly of the School in order to address them effectively. It is important to note that these weaknesses primarily pertain to the modification and practical implementation of the quality assurance processes, rather than indicating any significant deviations that could directly impact the UGP itself.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The Quality Assurance Policy of the Department, particularly concerning the Undergraduate Program (UGP), should be enhanced with specific and practically applicable processes. It is important to establish clear and focused Quality Assurance Goals specifically tailored to the UGP, rather than solely emphasizing research performance. Research-related goals can be assigned as Quality Assurance Goals for the Department as a whole.

To address these considerations, the following improvements can be made:

- The Quality Assurance Goals for the UGP should be increased, with a focus on the UGP itself.
- The Quality Assurance Policy should include provisions for the formal involvement of external stakeholders and/or graduates in the annual assessment of the curriculum. Their perspectives and insights can greatly contribute to the continuous improvement of the UGP.
- Specific remedy measures addressing quality deviations in teaching should be included in the Quality Assurance Policy. This ensures that appropriate actions are taken when deviations from expected quality are identified.
- The role of the Liaison and Career Office, such as conducting regular surveys with UGP graduates, should be clearly stated in the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) and the Quality Manual. This clarifies their involvement in assessing the quality goal related to the qualifications acquired by UGP graduates.
- Evaluation by students of the quality of infrastructure, services, processes, and tools supporting learning and academic activities should be included as a distinct process in the Quality Manual. Similarly, the evaluation of support services like administrative services, the Library, and the student welfare office should also be explicitly addressed to affirm their quality

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

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

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

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

Relevant documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The UGP has well defined objectives and follows best national and international practices. The program is comprehensive and focused, with a sensible balance of fundamental and applied

learning outcomes. The overall structure and content of the program is similar to other established programs in Europe and North America. There is a reasonable balance of core and elective courses, with appropriate depth and coverage of current and emerging themes.

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

One important source of feedback for monitoring and improving quality is student questionnaires, which are filled and processed electronically. However, participation from students in the questionnaires doesn't seem to be very high (as in many other institutions around the country). Particular attention should be given by the Department in trying to remedy this problem and instil to students and teachers alike that quality is a fundamental dimension in all aspects of human endeavour be it academic or professional.

Another important source of feedback for monitoring and improving quality comes from external stakeholders (and, later, from the alumni). However, currently, this feedback process is rather ad-hoc, based on personal contacts among faculty and external stakeholders. The Department should seek the establishment of an Advisory Board comprising Faculty members and external stakeholders (and, later, Alumni). The establishment of such a board should be very beneficial to both.

Although there are no graduates yet, the Department should aim to establish an alumni network. Establishing such a network would help students link to professional networks nationally and internationally and benefit the overall visibility and reputation of the department.

The Department has established a formal faculty advisor scheme to assist students throughout their studies. Apart from that, students indicated that faculty members are helpful and always available when students need advice or assistance in their studies. Faculty members appear to care for and work closely with students to help them grow and succeed.

The program is compliant with the ECTS system. The students have opportunities to take courses abroad, thanks to the ERASMUS program and bilateral agreements between the department and universities abroad. Participation in Erasmus by students or Faculty remains very small which is understandable for a newly created department.

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

During its discussion with students, the EEAP heard that the students were extremely satisfied by the overall atmosphere in the department and the help and guidance they get from their teachers. Student interviews also indicated a strong interest for closer interaction with industry and further opportunities to prepare themselves for the labour market.

During the interviews with the external stakeholders the panel heard that the chamber of commerce will dispose of an area of 200 acres for the development of projects including intelligent agriculture projects. The department has every interest in collaborating closely in

this development that could lead to a technological park. This would greatly enhance the quality of the UGP.

II. Analysis

A few weak points impacting Quality Assurance were identified which need to be attended to by the department (see “recommendations” below). However, the department is in its very early state of operation and the EEAP is convinced that, given the enthusiasm of the academic staff, all these weak points will be attended to in the best possible manner.

III. Conclusions

A well-structured UGP executed by a young and dynamic department with great potential and filling a real market need. A research strategy emphasizing on smart specialization (for instance intelligent agriculture) will be beneficial and can give a distinctive branding to the UGP. The (re)design processes of the UGP are the typical ones and ignore the view of the external stakeholders (local industry & society, graduates of the previous UGP, etc).

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

- Find ways to increase student participation in the course questionnaires.
- Institute an Advisory Board that can help on the annual assessment and (re)design of the UGP.
- Progressively establish an alumni network, and make use of the network for UGP evaluation, publicity and promotion.
- Include the practical training in the official UGP credit structure. Consider making internships mandatory for the UGP.
- Make better use of Erasmus opportunities.
- Organize better information sessions around key aspects of the degree, i.e., internships, specializations etc.
- Develop a close collaboration with the chamber of commerce and push for the development of a technological park.

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

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

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

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

Relevant documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The UGP has undergone a significant redesign towards from the academic period 2019 - 2020 onwards. There is a plurality of electives without field-based choice restrictions (electives are open to all). This enables students to tailor their specialisation to their interests easily and effectively.

The basic principles of student-centred learning are accommodated via projects tailored to students' interests and strengths mainly in elective courses in the higher semesters. Most courses are graded only based on final exam results. Only 30% of the total course includes a project in the course's curriculum. Something that can put a lot of stress on students during final exams, because their grade is so dependent on it. Overall, the teaching staff is quite acquainted with student centred learning and tries to apply it as much as possible. Most UGP courses are designed in a way that promotes mutual respect in the student - teacher relationship while a formal procedure for student appeals is included in the IQAS.

Expected learning outcomes per course as well as grading is announced by the instructor(s) at the first lecture of the course, and they are posted on the LCMS. Learning outcomes are also stated clearly in the course description and the Program Guide.

Students' feedback regarding learning content, delivery modes and assessment methods, is collected by a properly designed questionnaire. All courses, at the end of each semester are subject to an anonymous, written evaluation, which gives the Department Chair insight into the smooth running of the course(s). Instructors are then informed for students' evaluation and comments to improve the effectiveness of their teaching approaches.

There is a formal procedure for student appeals in place, though it is rarely used, due to the high student satisfaction for the undergraduate program.

A Student Academic Advisor program is in place, where a specific student advisor is assigned to every student in the 1st semester and remains the same throughout the student's studies. Unfortunately, the Student Academic Advisor program is not very popular amongst students and is not really in use.

Students are encouraged to pursue their ideas and experiment with them in the school's lab facilities so they can develop individual skills.

The school fully supports students and staff with disabilities, where appropriate and feasible, by properly designed classrooms, with counselling and special provision for laboratory exercises, etc.

II. Analysis

Regarding the course delivery modes, the Department has been running Moodle as their basic LCMS (Learning Content Management System). This system has been extensively used (more than 3200 total users and 141 different courses). The entirety of UGP courses make extensive use of this LCMS.

The provision of an academic advisor per semester ensures compliance with University policies and smooth dissemination of information related to the UGP but makes it difficult for personalized assistance to the students. On the contrary, this is done in an ad-hoc manner, during higher semesters in the framework of elective courses where the students feel comfortable to consult their instructors regarding their studies as well as their future plans.

III. Conclusions

The UGP was designed and is delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating their own learning process and experience. Thus, the main aim of student-centred learning is practically satisfied. However, teaching staff training to design their courses in a manner that fully supports student-centred learning is still needed.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Regular evaluation and adjustment of course delivery modes and pedagogical methods applied, should be considered.
- Robust assessment processes are critical for a rigorous evaluation of the level of student learning. Beyond learning outcomes judgement, the modes of assessment selected should shape not just what, but how students learn. Empowering and engaging learners through assessment design and providing opportunities for dialogic feedback is central to learning and the student experience.
- Training of teaching staff regarding student-centred learning should be considered. Establishment, at institution level, of a Centre for Teaching and Learning which aims to improve the teaching experience could help towards this direction.
- Three ways to think about the role of teachers in student-centred learning are: resources (teachers serve as experts and key sources of knowledge, and students share responsibility for accessing that knowledge), mentors (strong relationships with trusted adults give students the confidence and motivation they need to take leadership in their learning), and guides (teachers provide the structure and guidance that enables students to overcome challenges and see how their classwork connects to larger interests and goals).
- Increasing the number of courses that include a project in their curriculum, so that the final exam doesn't play such a crucial role in the students' grades.
- Please consider for every student a meeting to be arranged with their academic advisor, in the 1st semester, which should help the students feel comfortable to ask for assistance for any matter they face during their studies as well as for deciding about their future.

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

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

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

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

as well as

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

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

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

Relevant documentation

- *Internal regulation for the operation of the new study programme*
- *Regulation of studies, internship, mobility and student assignments*
- *Printed Diploma Supplement*
- *Certificate from the President of the academic unit that the diploma supplement is awarded to all graduates without exception together with the degree or the certificate of completion of studies*

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The Department strictly adheres to the student admissions processes set by the Greek Ministry of Education, which are based on National University admission and Entrance exams.

Upon enrolment, new students are provided with an Information Brochure that outlines the necessary steps for registration and access to the Department's electronic services. These services include obtaining an Academic ID card, connecting to Wi-Fi, managing the personal

Student Card, registering for courses and textbooks, accessing the Computer Centre and Library, and downloading certificates and diplomas. Additionally, a welcoming event is organized to introduce first-year students to the program and the Department's organization. To support students' progress, ongoing communication with academic staff is maintained. Course grades are entered by instructors into an electronic platform accessible to students. Although the department offers academic advising, it is currently not functioning effectively. The UGP requires from the students to undertake a final year project (thesis), with clear requirements outlined in the Programme Study Guide.

Student mobility is primarily facilitated through the Erasmus+ program, allowing students to attend classes abroad, carry out internships, or conduct research for their thesis. While the internship is included in the study guide, it is not compulsory for obtaining the diploma.

Furthermore, the Institution has established procedures for the award and recognition of higher education degrees, study duration, rules for student progression, and credit recognition among various European academic institutions, following the Lisbon Recognition Convention. Students receive documentation explaining the learning outcomes, context, level, and content of their completed studies leading to their qualifications. Upon graduation, all students automatically will receive a Diploma Supplement that includes information on ECTS credits and the successfully completed courses, in accordance with a University-wide policy.

Overall, efforts are made to ensure smooth admissions, provide comprehensive information and support to students, and facilitate student mobility and research opportunities. However, there is a need to improve the effectiveness of academic advising and further promote the importance of internships for students' professional development.

II. Analysis

During the meetings with the students and graduates it was verified that the Department is doing their best to help students conclude their studies gracefully and to promote excellency. However, the accredited ECTS, duration and promotion of internships, either in the framework of Erasmus+ or in the local industry, gives the impression that the importance of internships is downgraded even though the internship network (and the familiarity of staff to run an internship programs) is one of the Department' strongest points.

A similar situation was found for students' mobility. While the UGP is ECTS compatible and rules for approving student mobilities are quite fair, it seems that students' mobility is not given emphasis. The objective of students' mobility is to contribute to establishing a European Education Area with a global outreach and to strengthen the link between education and research. The Department should give the information/opportunity to the students to get exposed to different views, knowledge, teaching, and research methods as well as work practices in their study field in the European and international context and develop their transversal skills such as communication skills, language skills, critical thinking, problem solving, inter-cultural skills and research skills. Thus, it is crucial for the Department to address these areas and ensure that internships and student mobility are given the necessary attention

and support they deserve. Establishing an alumni association can play a pivotal role in this endeavour, as it can serve as a platform for graduates to share their experiences and provide valuable guidance to current students, enhancing the overall educational experience and strengthening the bond between the university and its graduates.

III. Conclusions

The Department tries to do their best to ensure the smooth operation of the UGP and provide students with an active and effective learning environment. However, it has come to light that a significant component of the curriculum, i.e., student mobility, is being suppressed and under-promoted. This suppression hinders the holistic development and future prospects of the students. In addition to that, the Department should also consider the integration of an alumni association as a vital component of UGP. The involvement of an alumni association can play a pivotal role in enriching the curriculum by leveraging the experiences and networks of former students. Through the alumni association, students can benefit from the practical insights, industry connections, and guidance offered by graduates who have successfully completed internships and engaged in student mobility programs. By actively involving alumni, the Department can bridge the gap between academia and real-world experiences, fostering a stronger connection between students, alumni, and the professional world.

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

- Try to maintain and strengthen your network with the local industry, extend your internship network, upgrade the importance of internship in the UGP.
- Undertake a campaign for promoting students (and staff) mobility. Consider extending your Erasmus+ network with new agreements as an absolute priority.

- Prioritize the creation of an alumni association to foster a stronger connection between the UGP and its graduates.

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

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

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

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

Relevant documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

When it comes to recruiting and employing new academic staff members, the Department strictly adheres to the transparent processes outlined by the Ministry of Education. The policies implemented to attract highly qualified academic personnel align with those followed by other Greek universities.

However, it should be noted that the department has primarily hired teaching staff through the consolidation of TEI of Central Macedonia. Consequently, only one member was hired from the open market. In total, the Department currently has 16 permanent staff members, several adjunct teaching staff, 2 members from ADIP staff, and 2 admin staff members.

All faculty members possess the necessary qualifications to effectively teach the program modules. The professors and department recognize the importance of both teaching and research. Considerable efforts were made by the teaching faculty to incorporate research elements into undergraduate lectures.

The Department conducts regular evaluations of courses and staff performance, and peer review processes are in place among the teaching members. Additionally, the options for teaching staff mobility are limited to Erasmus exchanges (there are 4 agreements) but no staff took a sabbatical break. It is important to ensure that such mechanisms are available and accessible to academic staff members.

II. Analysis

Regular student evaluations of the teaching staff are conducted on a semester basis. However, it is important to note that only a rather small percentage of students actively participate in these evaluations. Each semester, students are requested to complete electronic questionnaires / surveys using an in-house developed software, which adequately facilitates the evaluation process.

Nevertheless, the major concern lies in the low level of student participation, which significantly diminishes the effectiveness of the outcomes and hinders the achievement of comprehensive teacher assessments. The EEAP acknowledges the difficulty in rectifying this issue but emphasizes the need for the Department to intensify its efforts in motivating and encouraging students to actively engage in the evaluation process. This is crucial as it directly impacts teacher assessment and professional development.

The panel expresses concern regarding the absence of a comprehensive strategy for staff mobility within the department. Participation in ERASMUS+ exchanges appears to be limited, with only one staff member having taken part in such an exchange. Furthermore, there is a lack of active encouragement or a plan in place to support teaching staff in obtaining sabbatical leaves.

Teaching staff is somehow overwhelmed as they are responsible for teaching two modules every semester. Additionally, they are burdened with an excessive number of other duties: student advising etc However, in terms of overall teaching load, it is not excessively demanding. On the administrative front, the workload is on the heavier side, but it is in line with the typical workload found in Greek universities.

III. Conclusions

It is crucial to prioritize the resolution of key issues such as sabbaticals and staff mobility, as they play a vital role in the professional growth and development of the staff members. These aspects need to be actively addressed and resolved to create a conducive environment for staff advancement and overall improvement within the Department.

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

- Try to establish a research strategy that focuses on creating areas of excellence and smart specialization. Pursuing collaboration with other departments of IHU for that purpose could be beneficial.
- Efforts should be made to enhance staff development by addressing matters related to sabbatical leaves and staff mobility.
- Promote and foster innovation in teaching methods, while actively encouraging the utilization of new technologies for effective teaching practices.

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

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

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

Relevant documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The Department is located southeast of Serres. There is a bus that transports students and staff between the campus and the City but the campus is within walking distance from the city centre anyway.

The Department has several amphitheatres, modern classrooms and a number of specialised labs (lab sessions run in rotation as they have limited capacity). There is a Computer Centre with specialised software for laboratory teaching. Also, there are several student services: Department of Student Affairs, Directorate of Academic Affairs, Liaison and Career Office, Language Centre, Library, and Information Centre etc. There is also a Cafeteria that provides catering for students and staff.

The admin part of the Department currently employs two members of staff. All student requests are handled electronically, minimising the need for “physical requests”.

A Liaison and Career Office should be established as soon as possible at institution level with branches at each one of University's campuses. its role in promoting the UGP, via the graduates, in UGPs implementation, through the internship network, and for the UGP amendment and redesign, by collecting data from graduates and external stakeholders could be vital. Students' mobility is limited. The Erasmus Office, also operating at institution level, must be more active and proactive in establishing new agreements and promoting student mobility.

II. Analysis

The facilities are brand new; the access is easy, and the laboratories are well staffed and open to the students. The only problem identified and confirmed by the instructors and lab assistance is that the computers in computer labs are rather old and need to be upgraded as soon as possible.

The teaching facilities are in good condition and sufficient. The labs are well equipped and up to date. Using lab rotation, they can handle the large number of students. Overall, the teaching facilities appear to run in a satisfactory manner.

III. Conclusions

Overall, the Department is substantially doing well with learning resources and student support. But they need to address the issues identified above. The IHU, on the other hand, should establish a Liaison and Career Office with branches in each one of the university campuses.

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

- A Liaison and Career Office must be established as soon as possible. This Office can help in promoting the internships and extending the internship network of the Department. It should also be proactive by conducting annual surveys of the graduates to provide feedback for the (re)design of the UGP whenever needed. The graduates of the UGP are an asset and for publicity purposes.
- Students' mobility is limited. The IHU should establish an Erasmus Office having branches in all university campuses to facilitate easier students access to them and so allow each Erasmus Office branch to focus on the opportunities presented in the local area and in the needs of each local campus.
- Consider emphasising the benefits of Erasmus exchanges by organising presentations and orientation days explaining the process and answering students' questions on the topic.

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

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

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

Relevant documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The student information at the university is managed through a centralized system, which differs from the standard system used by many Greek universities. Instead, a commercial software (UNICORN) is employed.

Within the department, the MODIP computer systems play a central role in processing information. These systems interact and share information with various other systems, including the central university system, staff research analysis system, course evaluation system, advisory professor system, administration systems, and HAHE.

In order to assess the performance of academic staff and courses, students are provided with the opportunity to participate in anonymous surveys. However, the participation rates for these surveys are relatively low. Regular student satisfaction surveys are conducted, but the participation rate typically ranges from 10% to 12%. The department employs its own web-based software for the submission of these surveys. There is a formal internal process in place for analysing and acting based on the evaluation results. Discussions regarding the matter also take place at the General Assembly of the Department.

The department has demonstrated its capability to generate key performance indicators (KPIs) such as student retention/progression, academic success, and research quality. However, since the program has been delivered only in the last few years, indicators such as career paths and

completion rates will become available in a few years' time as the department continues towards its completion of the 5-year cycle.

II. Analysis

The Department boasts a robust and efficiently structured information management system that is currently in operation. Although UGP is currently undergoing a transitional phase and is in its early stages of development, certain vital performance indicators, such as career paths and completion rates, will only become accessible in the coming years as more data is gathered and analysed. However, the way the collected data, relevant to the UGP, are used for its improvement must be clarified and explained. Special attention must be given to the way data are analysed for decision-making.

The data regarding the KPIs that are submitted to the National Information System for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (NISQA) can be included and analysed in the internal reports of the Department for the purpose of UGP improvement.

III. Conclusions

The management of information within the Department has been thoroughly developed and is efficiently organized.

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

- Clarifications are needed in reference to the way the collected data, relevant to the UGP, are used for its improvement. Special attention must be given to the way data are analysed for decision-making.
- The data regarding the KPIs that are submitted to the National Information System for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (NISQA) can be included and analysed in the internal reports of the Department for the UGP.

Principle 9: Public Information Concerning the New Undergraduate Programmes

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

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

Relevant documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The Department is committed to maintaining an excellent IT infrastructure that greatly facilitates the dissemination of information and ensures transparency. The Department's website (<http://ict.i.hu.gr/>) is well-structured and consistently updated, providing a wide range of information about the academic unit and the UGP. This includes details on the program's structure, mode of attendance, assessment criteria, degree awarded, and the CVs of teaching staff, all easily accessible online. Course syllabi and the undergraduate course catalogue are rigorous and published on the website, offering clear insights into course structure and learning outcomes. The teaching staff sets explicit expectations for courses and clarifies the assessment methods at the start of each academic term.

To enhance public information regarding the UGP, the Department supports various activities such as information days for newly registered students, career days, conferences, and other related events, all available online. Moreover, the Department ensures that students receive regularly updated documents containing crucial information about its structure, curriculum, research activities, and workshops. By keeping these materials current, the Department enables students to stay well-informed and engaged in their academic journey.

Overall, the Department's commitment to maintaining a robust IT infrastructure, providing comprehensive online resources, and regularly updating information ensures transparency, facilitates access to essential details, and enhances the overall learning experience for students.

II. Analysis

The Department maintains a well-designed website that provides detailed information on all its online activities. However, the Committee notes that some elements of the website are not always updated in a timely manner. Finally, there is an inconsistency in the menu structure when the user switches from Greek to English. This is great problem for people without knowledge of the Greek language accessing the web page.

III. Conclusions

The Department's website is well-designed and serves as a valuable platform for providing necessary information, for the UGP, online. However, as the website acts as the Department's "shop window", special attention should be given to maintaining up-to-date and synchronized information content between the English and Greek versions. Efforts should be made to ensure that both versions of the website accurately reflect the current information, providing a consistent experience for users in both languages.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Try to keep the website information content up-to-date and synchronised between the two versions (English and Greek)
- Try to improve the navigation scheme for the MODIP website (including easy access to the Quality Manual)

Principle 10: Periodic Internal Review of the New Study Programmes

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

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

Relevant documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

There is yearly evaluation and eventual update of the curriculum whose results are published at the MODIP site. The latest evaluation took place in 2022 and pointed out the following urgent needs:

1. Having the integrated master as well as the professional rights for the graduates officially recognized by the state. This would influence positively the choice of the UGP by new students.
2. Hiring new faculty as well as supporting personnel.
3. Increased effort for synergies with other institutions in submitting competitive project proposals (not relevant to the UGP).
4. The possibility of negotiating with the governance of the institution the financial support to the Departments as well as the ways this support is allocated (partially relevant to UGP).

II. Analysis

The EEAP expects that a yearly internal review of the UGP, having the structure of the current report, is conducted. However, it seems that the yearly UGP evaluation is just a small part of the Department's evaluation (which also reports on research activities of the faculty, project grants, evaluation of post-graduate programs, etc).

The latest departmental internal review took place in 2022 but did not have enough previous reviews to benchmark the progress on and could not make judgement/evaluation on several areas of the programme (graduate employment prospects, feedback from external stakeholders, practical training, and thesis).

The main feedback for updating the UGP comes from faculty and students through questionnaires. However, there is no indication of external stakeholders' participation.

III. Conclusions

The internal review is still in its infancy, but the department has made enough effort to ensure that the preliminary evidence is adequate and offers confidence to the EEAP on implementation of future reviews.

The EEAP evaluation of this principle is based on premature and limited evidence which is to be expected from a UGP that started its operation in 2019. Based on the evidence submitted as part of the accreditation process and additional material requested during the visit the EEAP evaluates the programme as substantially compliant with this principle.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Annual assessment of the UGP should solicit the advice of external stakeholders.
- Drawing conclusions from the processed data and creating proposals and objectives for the improvement of the curriculum is a must.
- Data from the (future) graduates can be collected via regularly based surveys from the Liaison and Career Office, while feedback from the employers and other external stakeholders can be collected through their evaluation of the internships, they offer to UGP students
- Make the results of the internal evaluation and actions taken to remedy weak points identified more easily available to the constituents (e.g. students, external stakeholders, alumni etc).
- Make sure in the future that the yearly UGP evaluation is a more substantial part of the Department's evaluation.

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

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

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

Relevant documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

There is no recent formal external evaluation of the UGP, which is a result of procedures followed in Greece's Higher Education System. However, the Department is committed to the external evaluation process, as confirmed during meetings with OMEA and MODIP representatives, teaching staff, and students. The following findings were identified:

- The Department conducts regular evaluations of the UGP through the faculty assembly, in addition to evaluations organized by HAHE.
- The Institution intends to establish a Curriculum Committee dedicated to ongoing evaluation and improvement, in collaboration with market needs and student feedback.
- The Department of Computer, Informatics and Telecommunications Engineering demonstrates a strong commitment to quality assurance processes, with dedicated faculty and staff who support students academically and personally.
- All stakeholders, including faculty, lab personnel, and administrative staff, actively engage in the external review process and recognize its importance for improvement.
- Overall, students expressed satisfaction with their student experience and appreciate the efforts of the department and university faculty and staff.

The findings indicate that the Department is actively involved in self-evaluation and improvement processes, while also valuing external review to enhance the quality of the UGP.

II. Analysis

The UPA, being a new program, cannot be evaluated based on its graduates. However, the evaluation highlights the program's strength in classical studies of computer science, telecommunications, and robotics, which is evident to the students. This instils a sense of self-confidence in them as future Computer Engineers. Nevertheless, there is a need to place greater emphasis on the significance of internships and student mobility.

The institution should seize the opportunity provided by the external evaluation committee not only for the overall improvement of the Departments and its members but also specifically for enhancing the UGP. By leveraging the insights and recommendations from the external evaluation, the institution can further enhance the program's quality and effectiveness.

III. Conclusions

The EEAP acknowledged the Institution's recognition of the value and significance of external evaluation in enhancing the UGP program. However, it is crucial to promptly incorporate recommendations from both the formal evaluation organized by HAHE and external stakeholders into the UGP. Swift implementation of these recommendations will ensure continuous improvement and effectiveness of the program.

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

- Develop an action plan to assess and ensure the implementation of the appropriate external evaluation suggestions and recommendations.
- Try to establish an external Advisory Board to collect feedback about the UGP on a frequent and regular basis.
- Create progress reports, proposals, outline timelines and targets in preparation for the next external assessment.
- Pursue more frequent external evaluation, even though this is not your responsibility.

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

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

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

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

Relevant documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The Accreditation Proposal submitted by the CITE Department of the International Hellenic University jointly with the presentation of the department facilities was found to have provided the necessary documentation for the transition period the UGP is currently going through.

Provision was made for students that were enrolled in the pre-existing study program, to be able to continue their studies in the new study program. Also, students who wished to continue their studies to the new study program were given the opportunity to change revert their choice. On the downside however, that doesn't apply for students who were enrolled in the pre-existing study program and had at the start of the academic year 2018-2019 exceeded the

necessary number of years to complete the technological undergraduate program by over 2 years.

The Department's plan to facilitate the smooth conclusion of the first cycle of study for students completing the pre-existing study program. More specifically, the chairman has announced a table matching each class of the pre-existing study program with one from the new study program, that can be consulted by the students to understand which classes from the new study program they need to complete. Concluding all students continuing their studies in the pre-existing study program will do so by completing the necessary classes remaining, for them to be eligible for their previous department's corresponding diploma, in the form of completing the corresponding class as dictated by the matching table announced by the chairman of the department.

II. Analysis

An important thing to note is that the same matching tables are to be used by students who have decided to continue their studies in the new study program. Despite their decision to continue their studies in the new study program, students are not obliged to complement their study with any additional classes thus making it unclear how all the educational results of the new study program are going to be achieved. This is more concerning, considering the more demanding nature of the classes in the new study program in contrast with the corresponding ones from pre-existing study programs.

On the plus side, whilst not formally presented in the accreditation proposal documents, educational measures (study groups, seminars etc.) were implemented, to better accommodate students who decided to continue to the new study program and address their lack of necessary theoretical knowledge.

Special provision has been made for the conduct of the obligatory internship of the students enrolled in the pre-existing study program. More specifically internship will be performed with the same regulations and duration that were used in pre-existing study programs by the students still enrolled in them. It should be noted that students previously enrolled in the pre-existing study programs, who decided to continue their studies in the new study program comply to the new regulation and duration for practical training.

The MODIP has filed a detailed report on the transition period from the previous existing undergraduate program, detailing the obligations the department had by law and how they are implemented.

Finally, it should be mentioned that little to no information was given about the efforts the Department is going to or has made in order to help students still enrolled in pre-existing programs of study to be able to cope with the more demanding level of classes they have to now complete, in order to be able to get their diploma. The B1 accreditation proposal however does mention, in principle 12, that students enrolled in previous study programs are examined differently in respect to the length or the difficulty of the exam, which in turn makes the 1-1

equivalence of classes, as per announced the matching tables, less obvious as a practice for students that chose to continue their studies in the new study program.

III. Conclusions

The students enrolled in the previous UGP can easily continue in the new one by having one to one equivalence for the modules they have already attended without putting any extra effort despite the redesign and addition of new material to the modules of the new UGP. Thus, the overall approach the Department followed for the transition to the new UGP is convenience-based rather than quality-based. However, it seems that even with this student-friendly approach the new UGP is not very attractive to the students of the previous UGP, mainly because the professional rights of the new UGP graduates are not yet officially set in the Greek law.

The panel is concerned that a large number of students of the terminating TEI program need to graduate in a very short time.

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

- Create a university-linked tutor system to better accommodate the transition that students need to make.
- Take measures to ensure student's timely completion of the new UGP.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

- The UGP is well designed, following the structure and logic of similar well-established and long-lasting programs in Greece and abroad. It is supported by well-qualified and trained personnel while the well-equipped labs and the infrastructure in general is a plus that makes the program very competitive in Greece and internationally.
- There is a quite extended network for external stakeholders and while the faculty is experienced in conducting internship training.
- There is an increased interest by the students to do an internship. However, additional incentives (ECTS assigned to internship or mandatory internship) could secure that this interest will continue.
- There is a close relationship between students and teaching staff. The openness of staff and the critical view of students helps the UGP to run effectively.
- The Department follows clear, transparent, and fair processes for the recruitment of properly qualified permanent teaching staff. Recruitment of teaching staff on a contractual basis is also supported via transparent procedures.
- The Staff to Student ratio for the UGP, compared to similar programs in Greece, is very good.
- Student comments in the questionnaires for courses' evaluation are considered and actions towards addressing the raised issues are applied.

II. Areas of Weakness

- The increased number of outgoing student transfers is a possible threat for the sustainability of the Department and must be seen as such.
- There is no annual internal assessment for the UGP per se in written form.
- There is no provision to consider graduates' (and external stakeholders') feedback for the assessment of the UGP as a whole.
- Student centred learning principles need to be better understood and further implemented.
- Student, faculty, and personnel mobility needs encouragement. The Erasmus office should be more active in terms of expanding the Department's Erasmus network and for promoting mobility.
- Internship's duration and awarded ECTS need to be re-evaluated.
- The Liaison and Career Office should be activated by conducting surveys on the graduates and by expanding the internship network of the Department.
- There is no realistic strategic plan for IHU academic development. Such a plan should focus on the optimal utilisation of resources and infrastructure.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- The increased number of outgoing student transfers is a possible threat for the sustainability of the Department and must be seen as such. Although a definite solution to this problem does not seem to be feasible (and practically it is outside the Departments' control) measures to limit it as much as possible must be taken.
- Develop (institution level) a realistic strategic plan for IHU academic development. Such a plan should focus on the optimal utilisation of resources and infrastructure.
- Establish an External Advisory Board composed of external academics to ensure that the UGP is always up to date and follows international practice in the field. This Board can be extended to include industry people and graduates. Their feedback about the UGP shall be regularly sought for.
- A clear mission beyond the one defined by law, unique to the CITE department that highlights its excellence is formulated and published consistently in its documents and on the Web.
- Establishment, at institutional level, of a Centre for Teaching and Learning which aims to improve the teaching experience and effectiveness should be pursued as soon as possible.
- The Quality Assurance Policy of the Department, as far as the UGP is concerned, must be more specific and must include clear and practically applicable processes.
- The Quality Assurance Goals for the UGP should focus on the UGP, not on research performance. Goals related to research achievements can be set as Quality Assurance Goals for the Department. In that respect, Quality Assurance Goals directly related to UGP could be increased.
- The annual assessment of the curriculum must be specific and must contain similar evaluation points as the external one (the current report). For the purpose of the annual internal assessment of the UGP the views of teaching staff, graduates and external stakeholders must also be considered. Collecting data from the teaching staff regarding their own teaching approaches, their training to improve teaching and their suggestions for the modules they teach can be collected in a separate section of the annual activity reports they submit. Data from the graduates can be collected via regularly based surveys from the Liaison and Career Office, while feedback from the employers and other external stakeholders can be collected through their evaluation of the internships, they offer to UGP students.
- A provision for formal involvement of external stakeholders and/or graduates in the annual assessment of the curriculum should be added in the Quality Assurance Policy of the Department.
- Specific remedy measures accounting for quality deviations regarding teaching must be also added in the Quality Assurance Policy of the Department.
- A local branch (in Serres campus) of the Liaison and Career Office must be established. The role (e.g., conducting surveys of the UGP graduates on a regular basis) of this office

in the assessment of the quality goal that refers to the acquired qualifications by the UGP graduates should be clearly mentioned in the IQAS and the Quality Manual.

- The evaluation by the students of the quality of infrastructure, services, processes, and tools that support learning and academic activities must be included as a distinct process in the Quality Manual. The same also applies for the quality of support services such as the administrative services, the library, and the student welfare office.
- The Department should make better use of their internship network and their experience in running an internship program for the benefit of the UGP students and graduates. Towards this direction, consider upgrading the importance of Internship by letting a limited number of ECTS, maybe 10, to count for the ECTS required for graduation. Internships should be seen as an important tool of the UGP. The EEAP is very positive and supports the plan of the Department to make the internship mandatory in the UGP.
- The Department should try to identify means for the financial support of students doing their internships, beyond the national tools and the Erasmus+ program. The Liaison and Career Office can help in promoting the internships and extending the internship network of the Department. It should also be proactive by conducting annual surveys of the graduates to provide feedback for the (re)design of the UGP whenever needed.
- Take the initiative in establishing an Alumni Association and give them a role in the (re)design and evaluation of the UGP. The graduates of the UGP could be an asset and for publicity purposes.
- Make better use of the opportunities offered by the Erasmus+ for student and staff mobility. The Department should undertake a campaign to promote that. Extending their Erasmus+ network with new agreements must be an absolute priority.
- Regular evaluation and adjustment of course delivery modes and pedagogical methods applied, should be considered. A first step towards this is to include a relevant question in the Comments section of the course evaluation questionnaire.
- Training of teaching staff regarding student-centred learning should be considered. Establishment, at institution level, of a Centre for Teaching and Learning which aims to improve the teaching experience could help towards this direction.
- Consider defining, from the 1st semester, a specific per student academic advisor which should remain the same throughout student' studies. This will help the students feel comfortable to ask for assistance for any matter they face during their studies as well as for deciding about their future plans.
- Establish a research strategy towards the creation of excellence niches considering also smart specialization. For the latter, collaboration with other IHU departments (for instance the Department of Agriculture) could be beneficial for both UGPs. At institution level, giving incentives for cross-department collaboration (for instance setting internal grants for interdisciplinary research) could help IHU to develop a distinctive identity and brand name.

- Improve staff development by addressing the issues of sabbatical and mobility. Encourage innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies for teaching.
- At Institution level, the Erasmus Office should be activated to assist the faculty in order to establish additional agreements and promote student and staff mobility. If a local branch at Serres campus is required, the IHU should take immediate action towards this direction.
- The data regarding the KPIs that are submitted to the National Information System for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (NISQA) can be included and analysed in the internal reports of the Department for the UGP.
- Keep the website information content up-to-date and synchronized between the two versions (English and Greek).
- Make the results of the internal evaluation and actions taken more transparent and easily available to the constituents (e.g., students, external stakeholders, etc).

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: **1, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 11, and 12.**

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **2, 4, and 10.**

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. Prof. Nicolas Tsapatsoulis (Chair)**
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- 2. Prof. Costas Iliopoulos**
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- 3. Prof. Emeritus Nicolas Spyrtos**
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- 4. Mr Nikolaos Siadimas**
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- 5. Mr Georgios-Nikiforos Avgoustidis**
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