ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
HELLENIC REPUBLIC

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

Accounting and Finance

Institution: International Hellenic University
Date: 3 June 2023

Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the New Undergraduate Study Programme in operation of **Accounting and Finance** of the **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 **Accounting and Finance** 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 Ioannis Violaris (Chair)**
   Academic Programmes Director and Professor in Economics at the City Unity College, Nicosia and Visiting Professor at the Frederick, European and Neapolis Universities, Cyprus

2. **Prof Kostas Giannopoulos**
   Neapolis University, Paphos

3. **Dr. Nikolaos Voukelatos**
   University of Kent, UK

4. **Dr. Nikolaos Artavanis**
   Member of the Economic Chamber of Greece & Tulane University, USA

5. **Ms. Kyriaki Angeleidaki**
   Student, Department of Accounting and Finance, University of Macedonia, Greece

II.   Review Procedure and Documentation

The International Hellenic University (IHU) and the Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (HAHE) provided the External Evaluation and Accreditation Panel (EEAP) members two sets of documents. Specifically, HAHE provided the Quality indicators, the Accreditation guidelines and standards, the mapping grid assessment guide and the Report template. The University provided the Panel members 53 files on the programme's structure, internal quality assurance procedures, as well as details on the development of the new programme in relation to the pre-existing one.

The remote visit took place on 29.5.2023 and 30.5.2023. During these two days the External Evaluation and Accreditation Panel (EEAP) had the opportunity to meet with the University's and department's officials, as well as with students, administrative staff and external stakeholders related to the programme under review. The rest of the days have been devoted to the drafting of the External Evaluation Report as well as private meetings of the EEAP members.

The evaluation procedure was well structured and comprehensive, thus enabling the EEAP members to form a good picture of the programme, the department and university, its present status as well as its future prospective.

III.   New Undergraduate Study Programme in operation Profile

The new undergraduate programme (UGP) under review is a 4-year programme requiring students to complete 240 ECTS. Graduation is achieved after completing 48 courses; 37 required and 11 elective courses. The programme offers as an elective course a final-year project (Thesis) that earns 10 ECTS, and an optional, non-credit bearing internship.

The assessment criteria primarily involve a final examination, as well as a variety of continuous assessment methods, such as oral examinations, group projects, presentations etc., that are decided by each instructor, depending on the type of course.

There is a number of academic cooperation agreements mostly with European institutions that enable joint research projects, students' and faculty exchanges, as well as other academic programmes. The Department participates in the publication of the International Journal of Business and Economic Sciences Applied Research **(**IJBESAR) and the international student Olympiad Business and Management (temporarily suspended due to the Ukraine invasion).

The library currently has an adequate number of books' titles (more than 150,000) as well as access to scientific data bases (916 electronic journals and books).

At the time of the visit, fourteen (14) permanent teaching faculty members were employed at the Department, supported by four (4) special teaching staff members and three (3) administrative staff members.

The department admitted 116 students in the last academic year, which constitutes a significant decrease compared to previous years, due to the adoption of the minimum score requirement in entry exams. The admission grade is around 8.3 to 8.5. The projection for the next years is to admit about 150 students each year.

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 place 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. Finding

The EEAP has thoroughly assessed the documents provided by the HAHE as well as the University, specifically the presentation of the Department of Accounting & Finance, the strategic planning as far as the development of the programme is concerned, as well as the prospects for graduates, the needs of the Department in recruiting additional academic faculty, the structure of the programme and the feasibility and sustainability study.

The Department is strictly following the guidelines of HAHE as far as the achievement of KPIs (key performance indicators) are concerned.

The current academic year, the department admitted 116 students; a significant decline from the previous three years (during which they were admitting about 300-380). The total student population is presently 1200 and, given that the present number of permanent academic staff is 18, the ratio of lecturers to students is 1:66, which is definitely high. At least one additional academic staff will be added in fall 2023, and there is a need for at least 3-4 additional faculty members, according to the department.

II. Analysis

The EEAP has determined that as far as the academic profile is concerned the current professors and lecturers are well-qualified, yet hiring of additional faculty is a necessity if the current student population does not decrease due to declining admissions. This will enable them to achieve the mission of the department and the university.

As far as the strategy of the institution in achieving its academic development, the progress depends on enriching and better managing their human resources, both academics as well as administrative staff.

The documentation available on the feasibility of the operation of the department and the study programme is in line with HAHE's instructions and guidelines, yet better alignment of the KPI's to their mission should be further developed.

The documentation of the sustainability of the new department, which was also available, should be continuously updated, monitored, and disseminated to all internal and external stakeholders.

The structure of studies (the UGP) is in line with most other similar programmes offered in Greece and in other European universities and follows the guidelines of the Bologna agreement.

The official number of admissions is 150 students per year, which is consistent with the available facilities, and is expected to ameliorate the faculty to students' ratio to more acceptable levels in the future.

As far as postgraduate studies are concerned, the department offers three master level programs which are admitting approximately 80 to 90 students every year.

III.   Conclusions

Given our findings, we believe that given that hiring additional academic faculty members would help the further development of the UGP and achieving the department goals of excellence and internationalization. The exact needs in additional faculty have to be decided according to the intake of new students, given the trend of reduced admissions.

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	
Substantially compliant	x
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	x
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
e. The structure of studies	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	x
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
f. The number of admitted students	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	x
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	
Substantially compliant	**x**
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

R1.1 We recommend that the department further attempts to hire additional faculty members and administrative staff to ensure a reasonable ratio of faculty to students.

R1.2 We recommend that the Advisory Board is officially established so that a collective effort is in place in achieving further links to the industry and the local community.

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

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

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

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The department through the MODIP (Internal Quality Assurance Unit) and OMEA (Internal Quality Unit) has in place an appropriate quality assurance policy that is disseminated to all academic and administrative staff.

This policy is focusing on the following areas:

1. Digitalization
2. Excellence in teaching and research

3. Extroversion and Internationalization
4. Enhancement of links with the society and regional development

II. Analysis

The development in these areas is in its early stages, given that the university UGP has only commenced its operation in 2019. For instance, (i) digitalization has not yet been fully applied in the drafting of minutes, (ii) excellence in teaching is directly related to the hiring of additional faculty, (iii) extroversion is also a matter of having enough staff to undertake this task, (iv) links to the society and involvement in regional development again can further improve and expanded with the hiring of additional staff members.

It is obvious that, despite the dedication and extra curriculum efforts of the existing staff, the relatively large student population (taking into account the transferred students from the pre-existing Technological Institutes) places a burden on the staff that negatively affects their willingness to further personally develop.

Through the documents provided by the University specifically B7 Quality Policy and B8 Quality Targets the quality assurance policy is clearly set, and the institution and academic unit have planned the milestones that have to be followed and the EEAP believes that these will ensure its future development.

III. Conclusions

The quality assurance policy complies with the HAHE's requirements, yet this has to be better disseminated to all parties concerned and as much as possible involve them more actively.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R2.1 KPIs need to be further developed, be precisely quantified with the inclusion qualitative indices (e.g., quality of research). Such developments would facilitate the strategic planning of the Department, the assessments of outcomes and follow-up actions.

R2.2 A more specific manual for quality assurance needs to be prepared and disseminated to all parties concerned and involved in its implementation.

R2.3 The internal quality assurance and monitoring of the programme should include additional assessments methods, such as peer-review of the teaching, regular review of the curriculum and quantitative analysis of the ex-post learning outcomes.

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 study programme has been designed considering the broader aims and objectives of the University in conjunction with feedback from faculty members and the student body. The process is enriched by incorporating feedback from market practitioners as well as from relevant professional qualification bodies, such as the ACCA. The process is comprehensive and seems to be working. The curriculum could be enhanced further when more faculty members are appointed.

All programme courses, core and elective, are evaluated by students. Also, there is extensive use of online access to course material via e-class. Programme evaluation and changes undergo a structured and established process, with views captured from both staff and students throughout the process. Regulations at the Department and University level ensure that course delivery and examination take into account student-mitigated (e.g., illness) and continuous circumstances (e.g., learning disabilities).

The new programme offers an optional opportunity for students to undertake practical work experience that is not bearing any ECTS, leading to a decline in demand by students in recent years. However, during our meeting with graduates and market representatives the view was expressed that offering internships should be expanded to encompass a larger percentage of the student cohort. This is something that this Panel feels should be pursued, subject to the constraints that such a policy entails.

The e-class platform provides students with access to the programme course material and associated information. The information available to students allows them to make informed decisions on course selection and preparations. The information is updated for courses and lectures as needed to ensure that students can properly prepare for class. For course curriculum evolution and delivery, all programme courses are regularly commented on by students on their academic content, delivery and examination formats. It was noted that this process has a low participation rate, which reduces the usefulness of the feedback on student perceptions and opinions. The Department seeks to increase the response rates in this regard.

II. Analysis

In the current UG program, not all courses have the same degree of relevance for the two career paths and destinations: finance and accounting. Nevertheless, it appears that the programme is currently more heavily weighted towards the accounting and internal auditing streams, rather than finance. It seems however, that this is driven mostly by the needs of the market, as the sector of accounting and auditing is popular and offers better employment opportunities for young graduates.

Despite these observations, the curriculum is considered appropriate and covers a wide range of topics that are current and relevant to the job market. Almost all elements of the curriculum are also in line with the strategy of the UG programme. Evidence of flexibility and adaptability of the programme is also evidenced through the revisions of the programme, such as introduction of modules covering relevant accounting software.

Feedback from the Partners and Employers was also useful as it highlighted that the curriculum is attuned to the needs and requirements of market practice. Evidence of that is provided by the programme providing exemptions for 4 papers of the ACCA professional qualification. Overall, the programme is balanced between theory and practice and maintains a practical and applied focus, at the same time.

The participation of external stakeholders in particular industrial engagement in the designing of the program can be further expanded. The involvement of UG students is also sparse.

There is an informal procedure in place for incorporating feedback in the designing of the program, from current students, graduates, employers and other stakeholders. Although this is noted in the report, some elements of the process need to be strengthened. In particular, feedback from graduates and market practice seems to be incorporated into the programme through ad-hoc channels (word of mouth, informal contacts etc.). The EEAP feels that this should be done at a more formal level.

III.   Conclusions

Overall, the quality monitoring by the institution appears to be satisfactory. However, it is not always clear how the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) are set, how the goals are measured, and how the criteria are set by the institution. For example, there is not a clear mechanism to calculate the workload of each faculty member. The breakdown of the workload into teaching, administration and research would have enabled this Committee to assess better the performance of faculty members within the statutory working time.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R3.1 Set-up formal procedures for embedding feedback from students, graduates and other stakeholders into the curriculum.

R3.2 Draw KPIs and appropriately map them to the goals of the Institution.

R3.3. Industrial stakeholders should be further involved in establishing goals for quality assurance.

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 programme of studies consists of a total of 48 courses (240 ECTS) out of which 37 are compulsory and 11 are chosen from a list of electives (which is rather limited). There are no predetermined areas of specialization since these rely on student course choices. The limited number of electives is also restricting students in finding the appropriate area of specialization. Additionally, there are two English language courses (one compulsory and one elective), and there are no other foreign language options. The committee also observed that no pedagogy courses are offered for students who want to specialize in the teaching spectrum.

The students assured us that they have an active role in the classroom as their professors are asking questions and engaging dialogue with them. In case some students need more explanations on a subject, they can contact their lecturers during scheduled office hours or by sending an email. Moreover, all faculty members make sure to upload their study material and the assessment criteria and methods regularly on the e-class platform where all students have access remotely.

The assessment of courses is based on the grade of the final exam at the end of each semester. However, as students confirmed, almost half of the courses include individual or group

assignments that are taken into account for the final grade. In many cases there are also mid-term exams in order to track the progress of the students.

There is a students' complaints procedure in place in which the student records briefly, clearly and objectively the problem/complaint and submits it either to the secretariat, or to the President of the Department, in paper or electronic form.

An academic advisor is appointed to each student, their contact information can easily be found at the website, or they can be approached in person since every faculty member adopts an "open-door policy", in addition to official office hours.

In the middle of each semester, students get the chance to evaluate their professors and their courses. It came to our attention, however, that the percentage of participation in this process is surprisingly low and it is not reliable.

II.   Analysis

Faculty members clearly value student-centred learning since they are actively involving students in the learning process and are evaluating them with modern standards. They have mechanisms in place to ensure that the quality of their courses is steadily improving. Yet, the quantity of their electives is a restrictive factor for the department.

III.   Conclusions

The department has managed to keep up with the modern pedagogical methods and is taking steps to enhance student-centred learning in the programme of studies. Specifically, the EEAP expects that the UGP will increase the number of electives and introduce specializations.

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

R4.1 With the addition of new faculty members, it is strongly advised that more elective courses are offered under a structured specialization program.

R4.2 Immediate attention needs to be given to foreign languages and pedagogical courses.

R4.3 Encourage students to actively participate in the course evaluation process by providing feedback throughout the semester.

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 organizes an orientation program at the beginning of each academic year for the incoming students. During this process, students are provided with all the necessary information about the curriculum, the facilities, policies and responsibilities. Student

progression is being monitored both by an academic advisor and through exam score statistics in each semester.

The program provides the opportunity for a two-month internship, which is optional. Participation in the internship program has declined significantly---since it became optional---even though external stakeholders firmly believe that it provides valuable experience and knowledge to students that is pivotal to their professional rehabilitation in the future.

The department is participating in the Erasmus student exchange program, however during the last five years only seventeen (17) students of department have taken advantage of the program. Although the pandemic of COVID-19 pandemic has played an important role in student mobility during recent years, the number of students participating in the Erasmus program is particularly low.

The recognition of credits is based on established European principles through the ECTS system. All graduate students receive their printed diploma along with their supplementary diploma at no cost. Finally, there is an optional Thesis and there is a Thesis Handbook available.

II.   Analysis

The faculty has made sure that admitted students are feeling welcome from the moment they arrive and are equipped with all the necessary tools for a smooth student life. The study programme and thus the diploma given is in accordance with all the European standards. The department is making sincere efforts to maximize their internship programme with the available resources, but the Erasmus programme could definitely use both more time and attention to grow.

III.   Conclusions

The Department of Accounting and Finance has a well-structured and recognised programme of studies. The panel recognises that student-centred procedures, like the Erasmus and internship programmes, have limited participation.

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	
Substantially compliant	x
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

R5.1 Provide better information and encouragement to students about the capabilities and benefits of Erasmus, so they take advantage of the program. The Erasmus office has formed agreements with various universities, but the programme does not work as expected and participation rates are particularly low.

R5.2 Make an effort to increase student participation to internships, through (i) information sessions, (ii) increased remuneration, (iii) longer durations of the program (past 2 months).

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

Election of new Faculty members is performed transparently and according to standards recommended by the Hellenic Republic and in compliance with the European Principles. A relatively high fraction of faculty members are PhD graduates of this Department. The Department encourages Faculty to participate in professional conferences. Despite limited governmental funds available, the Department has developed and supports computer laboratories.

Faculty members quoted that there is heavy teaching load. Also, some faculty members have significant administrative work, which occupy them for significant amount of time, yet their teaching load stays the same. Having a rigid policy of teaching loads, is not conducive to creating an effective and productive research environment and puts pressure on research-active faculty members to work more than what is statutory required.

II.   Analysis

The Department has a modest scientific publication record in journals listed in various ranking databases. Even though aggregate publication and citation data at the department level were provided, any qualitative metrics were absent. The majority of publications are in lower-ranked journals and have a limited number of citations. More importantly, there is significant heterogeneity in the research output of faculty members; it is indicative that (i) the median h-index of Full Professors (9) is very close to the median h-index of Assistant Professors (7), and (ii) in several cases Assistant Professors have more citations than their higher-ranked peers.

As a result, a merit-based system that measures the contributions of faculty members---both quantitatively and qualitatively---is imperative to exploit the human capital of the department more efficiently. Faculty members who are more productive in research should be incentivized towards this aspect (e.g., participation in conferences, course releases), while peers that are more productive in teaching and administration should focus on these areas.

Additionally, the department should keep record of the workload of each faculty member to ensure that the designated responsibilities and expectations are realistic within the statutory working time.

III.   Conclusions

The department could have more potential to excel in all three areas of teaching, research and service, with the addition of new faculty and staff members. The contributions of some younger faculty members in research are noted and should be further supported. The department could more efficiently manage its human capital by establishing a system that measures the performance of each faculty member and allows them to focus in the areas they can contribute more within the legal working time limits.

Following the meeting, the Department provided additional information about the hiring process of new staff and the publication record of faculty members, yet the EEAP expects further development in this area.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R6.1 The University must adopt a working hours' policy, which is mandatory under the Laws of the Union (decision of Court of Justice, C-61/19), that breaks down the workload and explicitly allocates sufficient time for research.

R6.2 The department should create a merit-based system that accounts for the contributions of faculty in the areas of teaching, research and administrative tasks, and includes both quantitative and qualitative criteria. This system should be used to allocate resources and manage the human capital of the department.

R6.3 As part of this merit system, the department should decide on a list of target-journals and quantify their quality in accordance with their impact factors and field relevance.

R6.4 The department should provide incentives (e.g., funding, course releases) to research-active faculty, especially at the early stages of their careers.

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 EEAP completed a virtual tour of the campus and the facilities of the Department, that included classrooms, laboratories, common areas and faculty offices. The Department has the exclusive use of 9 classrooms (capacity: 760) and 5 laboratories (capacity: 200) with specialized software, which are sufficient for the needs of its educational programs. The facilities are well-equipped with means to support modern teaching and learning processes (e.g., projectors, screens, computers, access to internet). Importantly, most classrooms and all laboratories are accessible to students with disabilities.

The Department employs three (3) staff members to support administrative tasks, and offers a range of digital services to its students, including email accounts, an online learning platform (e-class) and e-secretariat. The digitalization of provided services is in progress.

II.   Analysis

The Department does not appear to have immediate needs in infrastructure, partially due to the reduced number of students admitted in recent years. Facilities and equipment appear to be well-maintained and updated when needed, with the care of the department's personnel. Students evaluate the facilities with a score above 4 out of 5, which is consistent with the view that the infrastructure is suitable and adequate for the teaching process. However, there are some minor maintenance issues, especially during winter months, which could have been addressed more efficiently.

On the campus level, there is an effort to update the facilities aiming to create a more comfortable and efficient environment for students, that would increase traffic and mainly the duration of student visits. This effort appears to be initially successful and should be supported and further enhanced.

III.   Conclusions

Overall, the infrastructure of the Department is adequate for the teaching process and for providing students with an environment suitable for educational purposes, given that the number of admitted students remains as projected (150 per annum). Initiatives for improving the existing facilities are always important, in which the efforts of faculty and staff are continuous.

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

R7.1 There is a need for an independent budget for the Department to address smaller infrastructure and maintenance issues in a more efficient and timely way, in addition to Increasing the budget of the University to address larger maintenance issues in a more timely and cost-efficient way.

R7.2 Task specific staff members with important Programs for the strategic planning of the Department, namely the development of the Erasmus and Apprentice Programs, with measurable goals (i.e., number of students enrolled).

R7.3 The campus is a strategic advantage of the unit, therefore efforts to make it more accessible and student-friendly are of critical importance. Ensuring easy transportation (in conjunction with community partners), as well as retention of students once they arrive on campus (e.g., study rooms, work-stations, gym, mini-market) should be high on the priority list of the administration.

Principle 8: Collection, Analysis and Use of Information for the Organization and Operation of New Undergraduate Programs

The Institutions and their academic units bear full responsibility for collecting, analyzing 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 EEAP attended an information session related to the Principal and accessed the Report of National Information System for Quality Assurance in Higher Education for the Department and the University.

The department is in the phase of upgrading its processes on collecting, analysing and using information to support the efficient management of its undergraduate programs. Specifically, in addition to the General Assembly, the department has established:

- An ***Internal Evaluation Group*** tasked with student evaluation and an internal report of teaching quality.
- A ***Curriculum Committee*** (reformed) that will examine possible changes in the curriculum once the first students graduate at the end of the year.
- An ***Outreach Committee*** to facilitate communication between students, stakeholders and the local community and promote initiatives and educational outcomes of the Department.
- A ***Research Committee*** to support the research initiatives of the Department.
- An ***External Advisory Committee*** that consists of graduates, industry representatives and faculty of other academic institutions.

II.   Analysis

Most of these committees are currently being reformed or have been recently established and are expected to increase the department's capability of receiving information and feedback from a variety of sources.

Currently, the department relies mostly on internal information, mainly student evaluations and the Internal Evaluation Group annual report. Even though, the amount of information received from these sources is considerable, its processing and distribution to the stakeholders appears to be limited.

Furthermore, the processing of the information may create misleading conclusions. For example, on the department website it states that "*it ranks high on the preferences of prospective students, as 88.5% of current students has placed the department in its 6 top-choices.*" Obviously, this statistic is subject to selection bias due to the fact that the candidate makes a choice after the entry exam score is known. An unbiased representation of this metric would be to report the lowest (and median) scores in entry exams for a number of recent years in comparison with competing institutions.

Another example is the presentation of the research output of the department, where numbers of publications and citations are reported in aggregate without any qualitative processing. For example, in 2020-21, the department has 38 publications with referees, but there is no information/weighting on the quality of the journals, the journal impact factors or the number of co-authors. In the same year, the Department reports 345 citations, however 60% of these originate from a single paper with 80 co-authors; excluding this outlier, the department's publications have received less than 3 citations per paper.

Furthermore, the analysis of the students' questionnaires is requiring further processing, specifically taking into student attendance, instructor grading patterns, and eliminating systematic biases (e.g., outliers, time-trends).

Finally, there is no merit system in place to measure the contribution of each faculty member in the areas of teaching, research and service. Such a system could reveal strengths and weaknesses of the group and allow for better allocation of resources and a more efficient use of the human capital of the department.

III.   Conclusions

In this transitional period, the need for high quality and properly processed information is critical to reveal the strengths and the weaknesses of the department. The goal should not be to present an image that everything is satisfactory on average, but instead reveal any heterogeneities that the department could exploit to advance its strategic goals. In this context, it is imperative to upgrade the level of processing and presentation of the available information and to create a fair merit system for faculty members that reflects their contribution.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R8.1 Establish a periodic (annual) survey recent graduates of the department focused on the overall student experience.

R8.2 Create a merit system for faculty based on their performance in teaching, research and service that incorporates quantitative as well as qualitative indexes. Use this system to better allocate resources and allow faculty to focus where they perform best.

R8.4 Periodically release high-quality information to stakeholders upon appropriate statistical processing (e.g., excluding outliers, time-trends).

R8.3 Publicize a Quality Policy document that includes factual information on the current state of the Department and measurable targets for the next few years.

Principle 9: Public Information Concerning the New Undergraduate Programmes

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

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

Relevant documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I.   Findings

The website of the Department is clear and well organized, with all key information presented in separate tabs for the Greek and English versions. The website is generally user-friendly and easily accessible.

The website has a dedicated webpage that provides extensive information about the new study programme. This includes all relevant information concerning the programme's structure, learning objectives, list of courses per term and their ECTS, mode of attendance, teaching methods, criteria of assessment etc. All this information is available in a single downloadable pdf file of the study guide rather than being displayed on-page. Key information about the University, the Department, and the city of Kavala (maps, public transport, etc.) is also available on the Study Guide document, albeit not displayed on-page.

A separate webpage provides information about the Department's members of staff, including their positions in the Department and contact details. Each faculty member is also linked to their Scopus and Google Scholar profiles. More information per faculty member is available as a downloadable file of their CV, but not displayed on-page. The webpage does not seem to link each member of staff with the specific courses that they teach in the programme, although this information is often provided in faculty members' CVs.

A separate webpage provides administrative support to students, with links to various digital services, FAQs, information about student internships etc. The website contains relatively little

information of a practical nature on issues such as infrastructure, pastoral services, accessibility services, and career/employability services.

The Department's policy for Quality Assurance is available online, with an on-page summary providing the main principles and a downloadable document offering more information.

II.   Analysis

The departmental website contains information that is accurate, relevant, easily accessible, and regularly updated. The website is fully bilingual, with all information being available in both the Greek and the English versions. The only exception seems to be the study guide, with the English version being noticeably less detailed than the Greek version.

The information provided is predominantly of an academic nature in the strict sense. There is considerably less emphasis on information of a more practical and/or pastoral nature which would have, nevertheless, been of significant value to current and prospective students.

There is relatively little information on the Erasmus programme, with the respective webpage actually linking to the Department's IJBESAR journal instead of providing information about Erasmus. This limitation seems to be at odds with the Department's goal of internationalization and the University's international nature.

The fact that key information about the new undergraduate programme is provided primarily in the form of downloadable files, rather than being displayed on-page, can be viewed as an practical limitation of the Department's website.

III.   Conclusions

The Departmental website contains a lot of key information that is of interest to current and prospective students and, to a lesser extent, to external stakeholders. The main emphasis is on academic information in the strict sense, with limited information of a more practical and pastoral nature. Overall, the information is presented in a clear and accessible manner, although accessibility could be further improved by reducing the reliance on downloadable files.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

<u>R9.1</u> The Department should consider moving away from downloadable files towards displaying key information on-page. While downloadable files can still serve a purpose on the website, most of the key information about the new programme would be significantly more easily accessible if displayed on-page.

<u>R9.2</u> The Department could consider placing a greater emphasis on providing information of a more practical and pastoral nature to students. This could include dedicated webpages on accessibility, employability, student support services, student societies & alumni, etc.

Principle 10: Periodic Internal Review of the New Study Programmes

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

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

Relevant documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I.   Findings

The periodic internal review of the new study programme is the joint responsibility of the University's unit for quality assurance (MODIP), the Department's internal evaluation committee (OMEA), and the Department's study programme committee (SPC). According to the Department's accreditation proposal, the internal review is scheduled to take place annually (every April), and it considers several relevant principles and criteria. Statistics on student attainment and student feedback appear to have a prominent place in the review process.

The internal review process requires the involvement of OMEA, MODIP, SPC, external stakeholders, and current students. It was not immediately obvious how faculty members, other than the ones sitting on the SPC, participate in the process aside from informal consultations and their participation in the Department's general assembly where the findings of the SPC are presented.

II.   Analysis

The institution has in place a reasonable process for the periodic internal review of the new study programme. The information collected is evaluated according to principles and criteria that are consistent with internationally recognized standards of good practice.

The conclusions of the internal review process are discussed in the Department's general assembly and, as such, they inform subsequent revisions and improvements of the study programme. However, some important aspects of the review process appear to lack a formal structure and definition. First, it is not immediately obvious what the main outputs of the internal review process are (in terms of producing an internal review report, action plan, etc.). Furthermore, there seems to be relatively limited scope for the outcomes of the internal review process to be communicated to internal and external stakeholders, other than their discussion at the Department's general assembly. A related point of concern is the lack of a specific process for monitoring the implementation of any action plan that results from the internal review process. Even though it is assumed that this task falls under the joint purview of the SPC, OMEA, and MODIP, no formal process seems to exist when it comes to reflecting on the implementation of any proposed revisions.

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

During discussions with external stakeholders, it became apparent that they participate actively in the internal review process, providing feedback and advising the Department on the evolving needs of the local economy and society.

III.   Conclusions

The Department has a reasonable process for the regular internal evaluation of the undergraduate study programme. The active involvement of external stakeholders is a particularly positive element of that process. However, the internal evaluation process could be further improved by adopting a more structured approach, especially in terms of producing well-defined outputs, such as an internal evaluation report and an action plan.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R10.1 The Department should consider formalizing the main outputs of the internal review process in the form of specific documents (for example an *internal review report* with a respective *action plan*).

R10.2 The Department could consider a more significant involvement of all faculty members in the review process.

R10.3 The Department is encouraged to consider a wider communication of the outcomes of the review process to internal and external stakeholders. To ensure greater transparency, the outcomes of the review process could also be made publicly available on the departmental website.

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

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

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

Relevant documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

This is the first external evaluation of the new undergraduate study programme. The Department itself has not yet been the subject of an external evaluation.

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

The University underwent an external evaluation by HAHE in May 2021. This process resulted in a set of recommendations to improve the educational provision of undergraduate programmes at the University. The Department accepted most of these recommendations and took certain actions to address them. While the accreditation report and the resulting recommendations refer to the University as a whole, they are still of significance to the Department of Accounting and Finance and the new undergraduate study programme.

II.   Analysis

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

The Department's accreditation proposal lists certain general actions that were taken to address the recommendations of the external evaluation report, albeit without providing much in terms of specifics.

Overall, due to the lack of a previous external review of the study programme, it is difficult for the Panel to comment on the Department's compliance with this principle with a high level of confidence.

III.   Conclusions

Despite the absence of a previous external evaluation of the Department itself, the external evaluation of the University in 2021 should have provided the basis for future action. It is not immediately obvious to what extent the recommendations that resulted from that evaluation were implemented by the Department. Nevertheless, the Department engaged closely and enthusiastically with the current external evaluation process, and it showed a willingness to discuss productively any potential recommendations for future improvement.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

<u>R11.1:</u> The Department is encouraged to place greater emphasis on considering the recommendations of the University's 2021 external evaluation report on its educational provision in general and the new undergraduate study programme in particular.

<u>R11.2:</u> In addition to creating an action plan to address these recommendations at the departmental level, the Department should also adopt a more structured approach of monitoring the implementation of this action plan.

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 programme under review has started being offered in 2019 following the establishment of the International Hellenic University; the programme is on accounting and finance and has drawn some elements from the pre-existing programme of the Higher Technological Institute (TEI) of East Macedonia that was one of the three TEIs that have been merged to form the university, specifically those of Central Macedonia, East Macedonia and the Alexandreio.

II.   Analysis

The new programme has been differentiated from the pre-existing one which focused on accounting only. Yet, and as per the legal requirements (4610/2019) the opportunity to existing TEI students was given to transfer to the newly formed university. This has placed a

burden to the newly established university as it still has to accommodate the transferred students along with the new ones. As the years pass, this burden will be diminishing.

III.   Conclusions

The EEAP has determined that the transition has taken place in a smooth way and has been running well, despite the small number of staff that have to simultaneously run two programs of study, that is the TEI one as well as the university one.

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

R12.1 There are no specific recommendations on this as the university has a legal obligation to accommodate the pre-existing students.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I.   Features of Good Practice

- The open-door policy, in addition to the official office hours, addressing on a personal basis students' needs and concerns.
- The positive perception of the external stakeholders toward the department and its students/graduates.
- The link of courses to the current trends in Accounting and Finance; the large number of laboratories using real case studies and other relative applications.
- Strong links with industry and market practice that provide improved course content and internship and employment opportunities for students.

II.   Areas of Weakness

- The small number of permanent academic faculty.
- The relatively low participation of students on Erasmus and internship programs.
- The mode in which the Department processes the information obtained from various sources.

III.   Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- The need to introduce a merit system and policy for motivating and encouraging research participation.
- Further encourage the participation of students in the internship scheme.
- Prerequisites to be established for some courses, such as Accounting I and II etc.
- The introduction of specializations, at least one in Accounting and one in Finance.
- The EEAP recommends that the department involves the stakeholders in a more formal and structured manner, for instance through a platform of communication with alumni and company representatives.
- The Department should embark on an on-going documentation and compilation of key, repeatable ongoing operating procedures and processes which are deemed to be of importance in an easy-to-follow graphical form (such as a flow chart). Such a collection of documents would standardize these procedures and serve as a "standards manual" that can be followed to ensure consistency of implementation.
- The EEAP recommends the implementation of a policy that checks every piece of assessment for plagiarism.
- Expand the collaboration with foreign academics, beyond the MOU stage, and broaden the international partnerships.

IV.   Summary & Overall Assessment

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

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, and 11.**

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are: **6 and 8.**

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

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

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname   **Signature**

1. **Prof Ioannis Violaris (Chair)**
   Academic Programmes Director and Professor in Economics at the City Unity College, Nicosia and Visiting Professor at the Frederick, European and Neapolis Universities, Cyprus

2. **Prof Kostas Giannopoulos**
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3. **Dr. Nikolaos Voukelatos**
   University of Kent, UK

4. **Dr. Nikolaos Artavanis**
   Member of the Economic Chamber of Greece & Tulane University, USA

5. **Ms. Kyriaki Angeleidaki**
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