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HELLENIC REPUBLIC



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

**Business Administration
Institution: University of Thessaly
Date: 24 September 2022**



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



Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of
the New Undergraduate Study Programme in operation of **Business
Administration** of the **University of Thessaly** 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 the department of Business Administration. of the **University of Thessaly** comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

1. Professor Christos Tsinopoulos (Chair)

Durham University Business School, UK

From 26/9 Royal Holloway School of Business and Management

2. Prof. Andreas Efstathiades

European University Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus

3. Prof. Fragkiskos Filippaios

University of East Anglia, Norwich, United Kingdom

4. Mr Anthony Panigiris

Economic Chamber of Greece, Athens, Greece

5. Mr Triantafyllos Zervas

Student of Business Administration, Hellenic Open University, Patras, Greece

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

A panel was put together by HAHE which consisted of the individuals named at the front of this report of which they are the authors. The visit was held on 19th and 20th of September 2022 via ZOOM. In preparation for this meeting, we were sent all the relevant documents that are required for the accreditation.

Prior to the visit we attended the relevant training and read all the provided material. We met on the morning of the first day of the visit to allocate tasks and identify areas that we needed to pay some further attention in. Overall, we felt that the information provided, and preparedness of the team was sufficient to conduct a thorough review of the department's progress and to provide a fair view on the degree to which it meets the accreditation requirements.

The visit took place over two days during which we met with representatives from the following groups: OMEA & MODIP, teaching staff members, students, and employers & social partners. We were also provided with a video and a live virtual tour of the main facilities. Finally, we met the senior management team of the department and University on two occasions (beginning and end of the two-day visit).

Overall, we were greeted warmly, and we found the University team to be knowledgeable, enthusiastic and well prepared.

III. New Undergraduate Study Programme in operation Profile

The new undergraduate programme is designed to be four years long. At the time of the visit (September 2022) the first students that entered the course had finished their third year and were starting the fourth. This means that there were no graduates as yet - the first are expected at the end of this academic year (2022-2023). Nevertheless, and given that the new programme sits within the structures of the University of Thessaly, we were able to provide a detailed evaluation of the overall processes that they have in place. Naturally, data on alumni destinations and overall student satisfaction is not yet available.

The programme is designed over the standard 8 semester structure that most Greek Undergraduate programmes are based on. It is mapped across the ECTS system. Students need to complete 48 modules (36 core and 12 optional). Despite the young age of the programme, students have a long list of electives to choose from.

The academic content consists of a healthy combination of management, finance and accounting related modules. The programme is organised according to two “thematic axes”: service management and digital management. The modules that comprise these two axes are driven by the faculty’s own expertise, e.g., on smart cities, and feedback they have received from external stakeholders, e.g., their industrial partners.

Since the beginning, each year about 350 students have been admitted to the programme. As they explain in their report this, admittedly, high number is the result of the changeable landscape of Greece's University admissions system. There is no doubt that such a high number of students has an impact on their overall experience and the ability of faculty to perform in other parts of their work, i.e., research. Furthermore, the rigid legal framework which prescribes the weekly number of hours that a faculty member has to lecture¹, means that there is very little margin for embedding new teaching methods. Nevertheless, and despite these structural challenges, which are present in many of Greece’s academic institutions, there is clear evidence that faculty are committed to delivering a student-centred experience.

The department is host to two postgraduate (MBA and on agile methods) and a doctoral programme. It also contributes to a cross-department programme on entrepreneurship. It has an active research environment which combines expertise across all areas of the business school subjects. Most prominently it has expertise on smart cities and is host to two research labs (management digital and educational skills and business analytics), which were presented to us during the virtual visit.

Finally, we would like to note the high standard of the facilities provision. We were shown an excellent building that sits within a very modern campus at the outskirts of Larisa.

¹As an indication, the prescribed six hour per week results in a teaching load which is about 100% higher to that of the UK’s leading Russell Group institutions.

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

Prior to the visit we were sent the strategy of the University and explanation of how this translated into the strategy for the department. There was a detailed balanced scorecard and a SWOT analysis. These clearly articulated the academic profile and mission of the department. The SWOT analysis has been supported by research that has been conducted on the attractiveness of the department and its modules. There is evidence of a process that is being followed to conduct the strategic analysis and to inform the decision making and direction of the department. However, as a full cycle of the programme has not yet been completed, the evidence of its effectiveness is relatively scarce. The department does follow all the relevant processes as directed by MODIP, which are consistent with both the overall legal framework and general good practice.

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

The documentation provided details of the mission of the department. It provided a clear statement of the scientific field in education as stated by UNESCO, which is: 4 Business, Administration and Law, 041 Business and administration, 0413 Management and administration. This was aligned with the wider mission of the University and informed by the expertise of the department, e.g., on smart cities and the management of services.

b. The strategy of the Institution for its academic development

The documentation did provide evidence of a review of the main stakeholders. There was a survey that was conducted with relevant stakeholders. Although this was done at a later stage, there was plenty of evidence to suggest that the faculty members have been proactively engaging with local and national stakeholders to align the teaching provision with the needs of the society more broadly. We were also provided with the SWOT and PESTEL analysis where it was evident that the University has been strongly supporting the department's development.

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

The core of the department and the relevant course is largely based on the standard curriculum of business studies. It compares favourably with those of other institutions nationally and internationally. The engagement with local and national stakeholders means that changes are being made as needed to ensure that the students will be able to cope with the needs of the Greek market. Furthermore, we saw evidence of the development of two labs which are driven by research expertise of the faculty members which also fed, to a degree, to their teaching practices.

There is some differentiation of the department relative to others in Greece and internationally. This is driven primarily by the expertise of the faculty members and the input of the local market. The demographics of the student body indicate that there is a good representation from across Greece. This could mean that the desired destinations are not local, but, at the very least, national. The curriculum does address some of the employability needs of the market. Its focus on the service management and digital management respond to what they have identified as important trends of the future needs.

d. The documentation of the sustainability of the new department

There is evidence of a clear understanding of the state of play of the department in terms of its human capital. They have 15 permanent academic members of staff. Only one of them is female. They have three members of support staff, which, given the number of students, is limited. They are housed in a relatively new building with overall state of the art facilities.

The funding structure is in line with that of the other Greek institutions which is determined by the government and controlled by the University. The member of staff's entrepreneurial spirit means that they are able to increase this and meet some of the needs of the faculty more broadly, e.g., for attending conferences. However, and given the number of students, there is clearly a need for some further support on the resources front.

Overall, there is evidence of a resource plan which tries to deal with the challenges of the limited resources and the changing nature of education more broadly.

e. The structure of studies

The report and supporting documentation provide evidence of a well thought out curriculum which provides students with the core knowledge of business studies. There is also appreciation of the need for the development of some softer skills. The structure of the course is mapped across the ECTS system.

There is also evidence of the focus on delivering a student-centred education. Despite the rigid legal framework and the over reliance on traditional lectures, they were able to provide evidence of more interactive teaching practices. This was documented and described during the visit. This is often undertaken informally and outside the contracted hours of academics.

Finally, the learning outcomes are clearly laid out and mapped across the needs of the students. There is also evidence that there is emphasis on teaching some of the softer skills needed in the world of work, e.g., teamwork, leadership and critical thinking.

f. The number of admitted students

The documentation provided evidence of a plan over the next three years. This depends on a complex formula that takes into account the marks awarded during Greece's national exams. In the first years of the operation, this resulted in a very high number of students (about 350 per year). Given the size of the department and the available resources, this is unsustainable. The department has recognised this and has been taking several actions to address it. First it is reviewing the entry level threshold so as to both increase the quality of the students and reduce their number. Second, it is reviewing the size of the faculty so as to recruit more academics. Finally, it is making use of adjuncts to address short term teaching challenges.

g. Postgraduate studies and research

The faculty has been developing a clear research strategy which is guided by the expertise of the academics, e.g., on smart cities and digital management. It has also developed two postgraduate degrees which it manages and one which is cross departmental. There is a PhD programme in place.

II. Analysis

The department is at its early stages of development. The findings outlined above provide good evidence of the progress it has made. There is a clear strategy in place and KPIs to measure progress towards meeting this strategy.

The documentation provided to us is clear and there is good evidence of use of the quality assurance system for steering the department.

It has been on a steady journey of implementation of the relevant procedures across all areas of academic activity. The academic members of staff have been developing expertise in some of the key areas and there are processes, outlined by the University, for measuring this.

We would like to note however, that the proportion of male/female faculty is very unfavourable and not on par with other national or international institutions and business schools. This would need to be addressed as a priority. There are several best practices and initiatives that a department can take to address this, e.g., developing diverse search committees, mentoring female PhD students, and so on.

III. Conclusions

Overall, we find that the department has been making excellent progress and that it is broadly compliant with this principle. It has a good strategy in place and KPIs which measure progress towards delivering this strategy.

The two areas that need further work relate to c and f. This is because of the high number of students that they have been admitting. As noted above, there are robust plans in place to ensure that the quality of the admitted students improves and that their number becomes more sustainable.

Finally, we would like to note the proportion of male/female academics. Only one out of 15 faculty members is female. This is not on par with other international institutions in business studies.

Panel Judgement

Principle 1: Strategic planning, feasibility and sustainability of the academic unit	
a. The academic profile and the mission of the academic unit	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
b. The strategy of the Institution for its academic development	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
c. The documentation of the feasibility of the operation of the department and the study programme	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	

Non-compliant	
d. The documentation of the sustainability of the new department	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
e. The structure of studies	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
f. The number of admitted students	
Fully compliant	
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	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

We would like to make the following recommendations:

R1.1 Set up processes for addressing the gender gap of faculty.

R1.2 Embed plans for the reduction of the student to staff ratio to more sustainable levels.

R1.3 Further engage with external partners and strengthen the processes for integrating their views on the development of new programmes and research proposals. This could be developed with the establishment of an advisory board (see recommendation in principle 2).

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 Institution implements a Quality Assurance Policy (QAP) which is aligned with the principles provided by HAHE. The Institution has in place an accredited Internal Quality Assurance System, and formulates and applies a Quality Assurance Policy, which is part of its strategy, specialises in the operation of the new academic units and the new study programs, and is accompanied by annual quality assurance goals for the continuous development and improvement of the academic units and the study programmes. The QAP of the department maps very well on the policy of the University. Department's QAP builds on four pillars: Design and implementation of research strategy, design and implementation of teaching strategy, processes for the measurement and evaluation of key performance indicators and processes

for the continuous improvement of research and teaching. These processes are all designed to ensure a commitment to satisfy the requirement of the University’s QAP as well as to ensure the continuous improvement of the department and the programme. The QAP is communicated to various parties, but the key emphasis is on communication with teaching staff. Processes for engaging students and external stakeholders are not fully formalised and take place through a single communication medium which is the website. As such there is only a one-way communication process. Currently three levels of goals exist. Goals are set at the University, departmental and programme levels. Goals are specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely with a clear definition of actions, responsibilities and timelines. These goals are measured with suitable KPIs. While the process for monitoring the goals exists, due to the short time frame between the establishment of the department and the programme and the EEAP’s visit, a full cycle has not been concluded.

II. Analysis

Some weak points impacting Quality Assurance were identified which need to be attended to by the department (see “recommendations” below). The department aspires to create a holistic total quality management process for the programme, and it is currently working towards developing additional processes for data collection, management and analysis. However, the department is in its very early state of operation and the EEAP is convinced that, given the enthusiasm of the permanent teaching staff, all these weak points will be attended to in the best possible manner.

III. Conclusions

A very young and dynamic department with great potential and filling a real market need.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

We would like to make the following recommendations:

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

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

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

R2.4 Make further use of Erasmus opportunities for teaching staff and student exchanges especially for outbound activities.

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 structure of the programme offers its students a range of courses that are divided into the following two categories totalling to 240 ECTS: Category A: Core Courses (180 ECTS); Category B: Elective Courses (60 ECTS). We note that the practical training and the thesis are elective courses.

The curriculum is structured in 2 thematic areas (axes): (a) Management of Services, (b) Digital Management. An important element in the structure of the programme is the introduction of courses for the acquisition of digital skills.

The undergraduate programme of the department has well defined objectives. The programme is comprehensive and focused, with a sensible balance of fundamental and applied learning outcomes. The overall structure and content of the programme is similar to other established programs in Greece and internationally. There is a reasonable balance of core and elective courses, with appropriate depth and coverage of current and emerging themes.

The Student Guide provides complete and concise information on the programme structure, curriculum and course content. The curriculum is well designed and compatible with universally accepted standards in the area. The design of the curriculum has been developed considering the University strategy and is adapted to meet the needs of the Greek Industry/Economy. All course syllabi and the undergraduate course catalogue are rigorous and provide clear information on course structure and learning outcomes. The teaching staff set clear expectations on the courses and clarify the course assessment methods in the beginning of each academic term.

For its continuous improvement the programme benefits from informal feedback received from external stakeholders as well as from linking and integrating academic staff research activities in the curriculum. One important source of feedback for monitoring and improving quality is student questionnaires. Another important source of feedback for monitoring and improving quality comes from external stakeholders through a survey and informal meetings. The programme is compliant with the ECTS system. The students have opportunities to take courses abroad, thanks to the ERASMUS programme and bilateral agreements between the department and universities abroad. Participation in Erasmus by students or teaching staff remains very small which is understandable for a newly created department and in the current circumstances of Covid19. There are, also, opportunities for incoming Erasmus students and the department facilitates this activity by offering a number of courses in English.

During its discussions with students, the EEAP heard that the students were very satisfied by the overall atmosphere in the department and the help and guidance they received from the teaching staff. Student interviews indicated a strong interest for closer interaction with industry and further opportunities to prepare themselves for the labour market.

II. Analysis

The main areas of focus for future improvement should be the increase of the student response rate to the evaluation surveys and the formalisation of feedback process with

external stakeholders and alumni. At the moment, the employers and local stakeholders feedback process is rather ad-hoc, based on personal contacts. The department should seek the establishment of an Advisory Board comprising permanent academic staff and external stakeholders (and later on also include alumni).

Although there are no graduates yet, the department should aim to establish a departmental alumni network. Establishing such a network would help students link to professional networks nationally and internationally and enhance the overall visibility and reputation of the department. It will also enable the department to collect data on the employability of their graduates and their career progression.

III. Conclusions

The review, development and implementation of programme changes follows a clear process. The programme has clear and well-articulated goals that reflect modern discipline needs. This is complemented by some formal and informal feedback by students and external stakeholders. The programme is fully compliant with principle 3 but future efforts should focus on improving the students' response rate to the evaluation survey and formalising the feedback process with external stakeholders and alumni.

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

We would like to make the following recommendations:

R3.1 The department should consider the implementation of an advisory board to ensure that feedback from external stakeholders is consistently informing module and course redesign.

R3.2 The department should establish a process for data collection and analysis of alumni employability and career progression.

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 offers a variety of pedagogical methods and includes flexible learning paths. Students can: take part in team-based activities; participate in exercises during classes; examine case studies; and raise questions to better comprehend the content of the lectures. However, the course delivery is based mainly on academic lectures. The practice-based activities, like laboratories and computing-based projects, represent only 17% of the teaching time.

The assessment criteria and methods are published in advance in the course outline. In addition to final exams, students are assessed through projects and midterm tests. Although a variety of assessment methods are in place, final exams remain the most frequently used method.

The student satisfaction surveys are conducted electronically. Unfortunately, participation from students in the questionnaires is low, not exceeding 12% (but not out of line with those

of other institutions nationally and internationally). Particular attention should be given by the department in trying to remedy this problem.

The department has established a formal teaching academic advisor scheme to assist students throughout their studies. This is quite difficult to fully embed as student numbers are too high. Students stated that about 1 out of 3 students has already reached out to their academic advisor and that the Institution shares their names at the beginning of each academic year on the university website.

There is a formal student appeal process. This enables student appeals/problems to be resolved in a timely, compassionate and confidential manner. The students we met indicated that teaching staff are helpful and always available when they need advice or assistance in their studies. Academic staff appear to care for and work closely with students to help them succeed.

II. Analysis

The programme allows students the opportunity to select their specialisation. A significant number of elective courses offers students ample opportunities to focus on particular areas of business management.

The programme also offers a variety of teaching and assessment methods, but these are clearly more focused on lectures and final exams, while alternative teaching and assessment methods have lower contributions to the learning process. Consideration should be given to increasing the contribution of other teaching methods such as practical laboratories, and the contribution of alternative methods of assessment, especially of soft skills through presentations and team-based projects. This approach will increase the variety of pedagogical methods.

There is a formal procedure for student feedback and appeals in place. Students have a variety of channels to provide feedback and ample opportunity to engage with the programme's development and teaching staff. At times this level of engagement exceeds the regulatory requirements. This develops a relationship of trust which inspires students to openly express themselves and provide constructive feedback.

III. Conclusions

The programme is delivered in a friendly environment that promotes mutual respect. Furthermore, the department has been implementing several initiatives that increasingly put students at the centre of their academic journey. However, we feel that there is more that can be done. The high student to staff ratio means that the academic advisor scheme is not very effective and, as a result, students cannot receive appropriate guidance on how to fully benefit from the options available to them.

Furthermore, the high proportion of traditional lectures means that there is relatively little space to integrate practice-based activities, which encourage the development of problem-

solving skills. The fact that students are discouraged to conduct a research-based thesis (See principle 5) further exacerbates this issue.

Finally, the heavy reliance on written exams limits the ability of integrating more creative and flexible assessment methods.

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

We would like to make the following recommendations:

R4.1 The department should continue promoting and encouraging student feedback and cultivate a culture of constructive criticism.

R4.2 The department should consider running the student satisfaction surveys during lectures to increase response rates.

R4.3 The department should involve student representatives in the design of the student satisfaction surveys.

R4.4 The department should gradually raise the percentage of practice-based teaching activities from the current 17%.

R4.5 The department should consider the use of more innovative assessment methods.

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

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

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

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

as well as

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

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

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

Relevant documentation

- *Internal regulation for the operation of the new study programme*
- *Regulation of studies, internship, mobility and student assignments*
- *Printed Diploma Supplement*

Certificate from the President of the academic unit that the diploma supplement is awarded to all graduates without exception together with the degree or the certificate of completion of studies

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

Students are informed of the structure of the programme of studies as they have access to the Study Guide in advance. This file, which is permanently available on the website, enables every student to see details about the university life, the processes and procedures followed, the courses available and the teaching and the administrative staff roles.

Students' progression is monitored through an electronic platform. Through this platform the students have access to the courses they have succeeded in, their grades and generally their progression.

Students' mobility is not particularly encouraged; however, the department uploads all the relevant mobility information on the website. Despite operating only for 3 years, there are several agreements with universities from foreign countries that enable students and teaching staff to participate in an Erasmus+ programme. There is an Erasmus+ office in the University that centrally manages applications for studying abroad.

The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is well implemented across the curriculum. 240 ECTS points are required in total for the successful completion of the studies. This is consistent with other similar 4-year undergraduate programmes. Therefore, the full academic acknowledgement of the courses that students are successfully examined in a foreign university is assured. The institution provides a wide range of business courses offered in English (from 1st - 8th semester), while requests from foreign students and professors/administrative staff for teaching/working abroad are handled from a centralised Erasmus office.

The Diploma Supplement is issued automatically to all graduates in Greek and in English, as documents B21.1 and B21.2 indicate.

All students have the option of conducting a Thesis instead of one optional elective in the final year. Although offering such an option is a positive addition to the student-centred learning, we feel that this is not rightly balanced. The student workload and benefits associated with conducting a dissertation are significantly higher to those of one elective. As a result, this is very likely to be a disincentive to opting for the dissertation.

The academic unit has defined a set of quality requirements for the implementation of the Thesis. We were provided with the documentation that sets out the regulations, e.g., who participates in the supervision, the stages of submission and presentation process and the next steps that should be followed in order for the whole project to be completed. However, there is no evidence of a student-friendly dissertation handbook.

A practical training is, also, in place. The practical training, which is scheduled to take place during the final year, is optional, and lasts around 3 months. A significant network of businesses, and local and national government has been developed to support the practical training. During the visit we met some of them (including the mayor of Larissa), who provided us with a very positive view of their engagement with the department. We should note that when we asked them for areas of improvement, they suggested to us that the practical training becomes compulsory and that the agricultural training provision is strengthened. They also expressed their strong will for establishing a continuous social and economic bond with the department and its students.

II. Analysis

There is a very clear progression path, described in detail in the programme's guide. All additional activities are also governed by specific procedures that are well documented. While all the necessary information is available on the website, it would be useful for the department to consider enhancing the information dissemination process by organising specific events.

III. Conclusions

The department's website is the main channel of communicating information to the students. To ensure better communication in student admissions, recognition and award, the EEAP offers several recommendations below. This set of recommendations would minimise the risk of lack of information.

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

We would like to make the following recommendations:

R5.1 - Organise an annual information Erasmus+ event. The event will help students to understand how the programme works, what are the requirements, what is the timeline etc.

R5.2 - Organise an annual information event focused on all the information a student needs to know about the Thesis and the Practical Training.

R5.3 - Create an official Advisory Board that will consist of external parties to bring closer the academic unit and the local market.

R5.4 - Sign Memorandum of Understandings (MoU) with local external stakeholders. These MoUs can cover the offering of practical training opportunities, engagement in projects as part of the Thesis, research initiatives etc.

R5.5 Consider offering at least 3 electives instead of a dissertation.

R5.6 Consider developing a student-friendly dissertation handbook.

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

The faculty consists of 15 members. 11 are at the full chair level, 3 at the associate professor level and 1 at the assistant professor level. Although this distribution is unusual, in that there are a lot more professors than assistant and associate, it is understandable given the history and transition of the department. We would, however, like to note there is only one female academic. This is a ratio which does not reflect those in other international comparator institutions which are reaching 50% representation. It is also out of line with the descriptive statistics of the student body. The panel considers this to be a matter that requires urgent attention.

There is a clear research strategy in place which has identified research themes that the department would like to excel at. Examples include the work on smart cities and the management of services. These have led to developments on the topics covered in the teaching and the relevant thematic “axes: digital management and management of services.

The procedures for recruiting staff are prescribed by the government. During the visit we discussed at great lengths the implications of this procedure and the constraints that it entails. The procedure is implemented thoroughly and transparently.

The department has a transparent process for allocating funds. Although limited, these have enabled academics to attend conferences and develop or sustain their academic networks. This is an area that would need further support.

The department and University collect all relevant data on academic progression. This is used to inform discussions on promotion when these are held. Given the relatively young age of the department, there was relatively little evidence of such discussions taking place on a regular basis.

There is a clear process for evaluating teaching by the students. Although this does not reach very high response rates, it is adequate and not out of line with those of other business studies institutions, especially after COVID.

There is an ERASMUS+ programme in place and colleagues are encouraged to participate. So far, we did not see any evidence of faculty making active use of this programme. However, as this is embedded, and the course goes through the full four-year cycle it is very likely for this to be fully implemented. We would like to note that the department, through the links of individuals, has developed an excellent network with international institutions.

II. Analysis

The processes that the department has in place for recruitment, promotion and progression are set by the government and implemented rigorously at the local level.

The strategy for research and support of colleagues is adequate and appropriate given the rigidity of the above process. The same applies for the allocation of funds for research activity and access to international networks.

III. Conclusions

During the visit it was apparent that there was an outstanding sense of collegiality, ownership, and enthusiasm. Overall, and despite the limited funds and rigidity of processes, there is plenty of evidence of compliance with this principle.

Nevertheless, we would like to draw the urgent attention of the department's and University's attention to the gender imbalance.

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

We would like to make the following recommendations:

R6.1 Consider recruiting more faculty at the assistant level.

R6.2 Consider implementing processes that result in a better gender balance.

R6.3 Continue implementing transparent processes for the allocation of research funds.

R6.4 Consider implementing a mentorship system for supporting early careers researchers' progression.

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 academic unit has the necessary facilities to ensure an appropriate teaching and learning environment for the new undergraduate programme. There are several lecture theatres and smaller seminar rooms, a library and a restaurant. All facilities are accessible to students with special needs, have elevators and ramps.

There is an adequate range of support services available to the university students. They have access to webmail, e-class platform, progression tracking system, free wi-fi connection via eduroam, library and more. There is also an adequate number of professional services' staff to ensure the smooth operation of the student support services. Additionally, there are centrally provided services offered by the Student's Advocate, the Career Office and the library staff. Furthermore, the institution has implemented a cloud-based computing system (Okeanos), which can support its efforts to integrate innovative processes of distance learning and to

make the programme resilient to possible future health/environmental crises. The institution utilises the broadly used online communication tools (MS Teams, ZOOM, etc) and has implemented the use of the Virtual Learning Environment supported by the Greek government (E-class).

The students have access to the Central Library of the University and, thus, to all the online journal subscriptions and databases through VPN (single sign-on). The teaching and learning material is uploaded on the E-class platform by the academic staff.

Moreover, the university encourages the administrative staff and the academic faculty to use the innovative electronic service 'Papyrus'.

Overall, the students are informed about the availability of services through the website and/or directly by the teaching and professional services staff. There is a plethora of academic services that conform with the modern era and ensure that each student is treated equally and transparently.

An area where there is more that can be offered, relates to more specialised provisions, e.g., for finance modules (Bloomberg terminals) or for conducting econometrics analysis, e.g., EViews.

II. Analysis

Overall, the existing facilities (physical and virtual) are adequate for the size of the undergraduate programme. Furthermore, the academic staff with their personal commitment to continuous improvement, has been able to develop a feeling of 'belonging' that makes the institution more appealing to future students and, thus, increasing its overall appeal.

III. Conclusions

The department and the University of Thessaly should be complemented for the quality and availability of infrastructure, teaching, and learning facilities and support offered to students.

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

We would like to make the following recommendation:

R7.1 Consider strengthening the provision of computer facilities, e.g., Bloomberg terminals for finance modules.

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

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

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

Relevant documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The department follows the guidance for the collection and analysis of data across all areas of activity. This is used to monitor and improve performance. It is also used to inform the development and delivery of strategy. During the visit we saw ample evidence of the implementation of this system and the feedback loops it generates. As the programme has not gone through its full cycle, however, there may still be some learning to be done about the implementation at the local level.

Student surveys are regularly conducted. During the visit examples of changes that resulted from this feedback. Although these changes were not substantial, they provided evidence of how the system operated. As the programme matures and the response rates increase, we would expect to see more such examples of changes following the feedback received. We did not see any staff surveys though.

II. Analysis

The procedures used to collect and analyse the relevant data are being implemented as appropriate. These are analysed regularly, and they feed into the University's system. During the visit the department showed how this has been developing and how it informs decision making. They also explained how this has led to the development of additional processes, standardised templates and handbooks. The individuals we spoke to understand the processes and were able to explain how they work.

III. Conclusions

The department has been using the University systems to collect and analyse the relevant processes. Given the length of time that this has been in place, the evidence of its effectiveness is relatively limited. However, from the evidence we saw, the approach to: collection, analyse and use Information is effectively implemented.

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

We would like to make the following recommendations:

R8.1 Ensure that the processes are fully embedded across all areas of activity.

R8.2 Conduct staff survey and possibly explicitly include adjuncts and other individuals that are engaged in the education process.

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 operates a website (<http://ba.uth.gr/>) that offers all the relevant information about the programme. This includes all the sections expected by an academic department, e.g., the structure of the course, the degree awarded, the professional qualifications achieved. The website is offered in both Greek and English. However, the English version is not fully developed. There is no other language option.

Most of the course information is available online. Access to e-class requires student or staff access. This means that we were not able to explore some aspects of the information provided in a lot of detail. However, the information provided offers the basic information needed for a prospective student to understand what the course is about.

The information is easy to access and read. There are links to some of the popular social media. However, the information on these platforms is not up to date and in some cases, it leads to dead links.

II. Analysis

The website includes the basic information required. Furthermore, a marketing plan was submitted. However, both appear to be at a relatively early stage of development. As a result, there is little evidence of a concerted effort to promote the department's activities and articulate how it differentiates itself from other similar institutions.

The appeal and user engagement of the website is monitored. Although we would like to commend the department and University for having such a review process in place, it also demonstrates the relative inactivity of the website. For instance, most users are single visitors, who tend to be existing students. There is therefore space for significant development of this aspect of the department's operation which will support it in its outreach activities and the building of reputation in Greece and beyond.

III. Conclusions

The above comments notwithstanding, we feel that in most areas that department has provided on its website the information which is needed for the purposes of this accreditation. There is sufficient information for existing and prospective students to understand the value of their degree and the activity of their department.

The one area where this is not the case is the provision of all the information in English and possibly in other languages. This limits its internationalisation efforts, which are part of its strategic vision and a requirement of this process. As a result, we have concluded that this principle is substantially compliant.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

We would like to make the following recommendations:

R9.1 The website and social media should be updated regularly.

R9.2 The English (and perhaps a second EU language) version of the website needs to be fully developed. This will support the department's efforts towards internationalisation.

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 UG programme is a new programme in the 3rd year of its operation and, as a result, there is little evidence of its ongoing evaluation. We should note that the MODIP processes for the regular evaluation are in place, so we expect that as the programme matures, regular evaluations will be undertaken.

Consultation for the development of the early design of the programme was conducted relatively informally. This was collected by distributing questionnaires and interviewing a sample of industrialists. The content of the programme was developed by connecting and integrating the research interests and activities of academic staff.

One important source of feedback for monitoring and reviewing the programme content is student questionnaires. The department is taking regular information from the students via the questionnaires that are distributed at the end of each course. The questionnaire addresses issues related to students' workload, progression and completion; effectiveness of the

assessment procedures, their expectations, needs and satisfaction with the programme and the learning environment. The students we met did not raise any concerns in relation to the fairness of programme procedures of examinations, structure and content. Another important source of feedback for programme revision comes from external stakeholders. However, this feedback process is rather ad-hoc, based on personal contacts among faculty members and external stakeholders. The external stakeholders we met expressed their satisfaction with their cooperation with the university.

The department has developed formal procedures for the regular monitoring, review and revision of the study programme but the whole process is not yet fully embedded and, as a result, it is early to judge its effectiveness.

II. Analysis

The programme is in its 3rd year of its operation and there are no graduates. As a result, there is no evidence yet of any updates of the curriculum. The process of redesigning the programme curriculum would need the collection of factual information from external stakeholders and the industrial partners after programme graduates have been employed. This means that at the time of this accreditation this full cycle has not yet been completed. Furthermore, the procedure of receiving feedback from students through questionnaires cannot be very reliable because of the relatively low response rate (about 12%).

In March 2022 a review was conducted by MODIP which provided a list of recommendations. At the time of the visit some of the recommendations of these were being considered, but there was little evidence of a systematic plan of implementation. This may be due to the relatively short period since the review and submission of the accreditation report or the relatively young age of the department.

Furthermore, the department explained how they have integrated feedback from external stakeholders to the curriculum. This has led to several new ideas and initiatives. However, there was no evidence that this was the result of a systematic and ongoing process.

III. Conclusions

The above points notwithstanding, the department has been implementing the relevant review processes as guided by MODIP, and there is evidence that it has been adopting it to its own needs. However, the programme is at its early stages and since its implementation no formal revision is undertaken. As a result, at the time of this accreditation there is not enough evidence of its implementation. We believe that in future years this will be remedied.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

We would like to make the following recommendations:

R10.1 Embed the procedures for conducting internal reviews and revisions of the study programs and ensure that the relevant data is reviewed regularly.

R10.2 Consider the setting up of an Advisory Board for the Programme, aiming at assisting towards the identification of the industry needs and at adjusting the programme content accordingly. Membership could include representatives of the Alumni Association (to be set up), Employer's Organisations, Representatives of Labour Organisations, and distinguished members of the academic community in areas related to the programme thematic areas.

R.10.3 Establish a departmental Alumni Association, which would also be consulted in periodic reviews of the programme.

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

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

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

Relevant documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The department started its activities in the academic year 2019-2020. Therefore, it is currently finishing only its third year of operation. As a result, there has been no external evaluation of the departmental operations so far. This is the first visit of an external evaluation/accreditation panel to the department. There is only the internal evaluation by the MODIP of HMU. In March 2022 there was an Internal evaluation by the MODIP, and a progress report was published describing possible recommendations for improvement.

As a result, the work conducted by the current panel sets the benchmarks for any future evaluation/accreditation panels.

All members of staff (teaching and administration) have been very engaged with the visit and they clearly understand the importance and welcome external evaluations. The EEAP's meeting with external stakeholders provided strong evidence of their commitment to working with the department.

II. Analysis

There has been no external evaluation of the departmental operations so far, nevertheless, the findings of the present panel as described in the 12 principles of this report could be used as the basis for a future external accreditation and evaluation.

The internal evaluation from MODIP recommends a number of useful actions for the department (not always directly applicable to the undergraduate programme) and together with this report can form a basis for improvement. It is worth highlighting that the EEAP has not seen a plan addressing the recommendations made by MODIP.

III. Conclusions

Accreditations and evaluations after a short operating period and with limited historical data require significant effort from the department to comply with standards. These visits should ideally take place after an entire cycle of the programme has been completed to ensure adequate evidence exists for all activities (thesis, practical training, alumni engagement, periodic programme review).

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

We would like to make the following recommendation:

R11.1 HAHE should reconsider the relation between evaluation and accreditation and the timing of these reviews especially for Institutions and Academic Units (departments) that have been established recently.

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

This is a newly formed department and undergraduate programme. The University decided to establish a process of teaching out for the programme offered by the previous department and not have a transition between the old and new programme. Graduates from the old programme can apply for the new award and they have to sit a number of courses to successfully complete the new degree. This is a well-documented process.

A small number of teaching staff delivers lectures on both programmes, and this is constantly reduced as the old programme goes through the teaching out phase.

II. Analysis

From the submitted paperwork and discussions with teaching staff it appears that the transition has not been a significant burden to them and the decision to establish a department and a number of new programmes was the most appropriate one.

III. Conclusions

The department has performed very well in setting up its own structure and creating a number of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

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

We would like to make the following recommendation:

R12.1 Continue the efforts to successfully finalise the teaching out of the old programme while intensifying the efforts for improving the teaching and research environment.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

The department was established three years ago. Its academic staff have a very robust academic background, and the curriculum is equivalent to that of other similar programmes nationally and internationally. There are several areas of good practice that were shown to us during the two-day visit and included in the documentation we were sent. We would like to highlight the following.

- The department consists of a group of enthusiastic academics. There is evidence of a culture of collegiality with a focus on student experience.
- There is good progress towards implementation of all relevant processes and quality assurance systems. In some cases, we were shown evidence of plans of significantly exceeding the requirements.
- There is good engagement with external stakeholders for both evaluating the programme and conducting research.
- The research of the academic staff members is relevant and focuses on delivering impact.

II. Areas of Weakness

The review and documentation indicated several areas where there is room for improvement. We would like to emphasise that these do not undermine the overall progress of the department towards meeting its strategic objectives. Most relate to the embeddedness of processes and the provision of evidence of their effectiveness. We strongly believe that as the department matures, these will be remedied. Here we would like to highlight the below:

- The representation of female academic faculty is very low. This is not on par with other business studies programmes and departments and is definitely not representative of the student body.
- There is no systematic integration of external stakeholder views on programme review processes. Although external stakeholders have been consulted at various stages, there is little evidence of this being conducted systematically or of being owned by someone within the department.
- The implementation of student-centred learning is at its early stages. Teaching is largely based on lectures and assessment on exams. There are relatively few opportunities for practice-based learning.
- The information available through the website is basic and only some of it is in English.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

We have provided detailed recommendations across all principles that we have been asked to review. Here we would like to highlight the following:

- Implementation of processes for increasing female candidates in election processes of new faculty members.
- Embeddedness of plans for the reduction of the student to staff ratio to more sustainable levels.
- Introduction of an advisory board.
- Develop a more detailed internationalisation plan.
- Take advantage of ERASMUS+ agreements and other such initiatives at the national and European level.
- Embed processes for continuous review and improvement and provide appropriate evidence.
- Increase practice-based activities during teaching.
- Establish a departmental Alumni Association which will work in support of the one offered by the University.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

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

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **4, 9, and 10.**

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

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

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname

Signature

1. Professor Christos Tsinopoulos (Chair)

Durham University Business School, UK

From 26/9 Royal Holloway School of Business and Management

2. Prof. Andreas Efstathiades

European University Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus

3. Prof. Fragkiskos Filippaios

University of East Anglia, Norwich, United Kingdom

4. Mr Anthony Panigiris

Economic Chamber of Greece, Athens, Greece

5. Mr Triantafyllos Zervas

Student of Business Administration, Hellenic Open University, Patras, Greece