



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ  
Α Δ Ι Π  
ΑΡΧΗ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ  
ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΣΤΗΝ ΑΝΩΤΑΤΗ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗ

HELLENIC REPUBLIC  
HQA  
HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE  
AND ACCREDITATION AGENCY

**Accreditation Report**  
**for the Undergraduate Study Programme**  
**(Integrated Master) of:**

**CIVIL ENGINEERING**

**Institution: UNIVERSITY OF THESSALY**

**Date: 16/11/2019**

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Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση  
Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινωνικό Ταμείο

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



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION  
FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE  
IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Report of the Panel appointed by the HQA to undertake the review of the Undergraduate Study Programme (Integrated Master) of **Civil Engineering** 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 Accreditation Panel**

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the Undergraduate Study Programme (Integrated Master) of **Civil Engineering** of the **University of Thessaly** comprised the following **three (3)** members, drawn from the HQA Register, in accordance with the Law 4009/2011:

- 1. Prof. Emeritus Dimitrios Kolymbas** (Chair)  
Universität Innsbruck, Innsbruck, Austria
  
- 2. Assoc. Prof. Petros Christou**  
Frederick University, Nicosia, Cyprus
  
- 3. Mrs. Athanasia Kapoula**  
Representative of the Technical Chamber of Greece

## II. Review Procedure and Documentation

The Panel visited the site of the Department of Civil Engineering of University of Thessaly (Volos) from 12th till 13th of November 2019.

**Day 1 of the visit:** the Panel arrived at Volos at 13:00. There was a meeting with the deputy rector for personnel Prof. S. Paraskevopoulos, the head of the department Prof. E. Mistakidis, and the OMEA and MODIP representatives.

**Day 2 of the visit:** Meetings with

- teaching staff members;
- students;
- graduates;
- employers and social partners.

and subsequently visit of classrooms and laboratories. Then meetings took place with OMEA and MODIP representatives and a closure meeting with the vice-rector of research Prof. I. Theodorakis, the Head of department and other representatives.

The meetings were very informative and the Panel had the opportunity and also all time needed to put questions and discuss freely. Particularly valuable information was offered in the meetings with students and also with graduates, employers and social partners, who unanimously praised the competence and motivation of the graduates.

The visit of the laboratories was accompanied by short presentations of the work executed there, a large part of which is related to local engineering projects but also devoted to the instruction of students. Despite the limited facilities the quality of the devices and the devoted personnel should be highlighted.

The organisation of the meetings was excellent and supported by plenty of printed and beamed material referring to the overall performance in teaching and research. Several theses and teaching material were presented as well as some of the recently published books. Among them the book on Fluid Mechanics by Prof. Liakopoulos meets the highest international standards and deserves special acknowledgement.

### III. Study Programme Profile

The University of Thessaly has been established with the Π.Δ. 83/1984. The Department of Civil Engineering was established with the Π.Δ. 177/28-4-1993 and it belongs to the school of Engineering of the University of Thessaly. The main building of the Department is a part of the former factory Papariga at Pedion Areos, city of Volos. The factory facilities were converted into classrooms, offices and laboratories.

The Department of Civil Engineering is committed to apply a quality assurance policy which supports the academic nature of the Department for teaching and training of the Civil Engineering students through a competent program of study. The program of study emphasizes on numerical competencies and experimental exercises ensuring that the graduates of the Department can respond to the challenges of the global market. The operation and planning of the Department of Civil Engineering aligns with the Strategic Planning and applies the practices of quality assurance of the University of Thessaly.

The Department offers an Integrated Master's Degree.

- The requirements for graduation is 300ECTS;
- The courses are distributed in 10 semesters of 30 ECTS each.

The program of study supports four (4) divisions:

- Geotechnical and Geo-environmental Engineering;
- Structural Engineering;
- Transport, Transportation and Environmental Management;
- Hydraulics and Environmental Engineering.

Overall the Department and the University provide a series of online services and laboratories for students and faculty such as:

- Organized webpage (<http://www.civ.uth.gr>);
- Student support service (<http://prosvasi.uth.gr>);
- E-Learning platform (e-class);
- E-Secretariat;
- 10 laboratories utilized in the 4 divisions operating in the Department;
- Software and basic equipment (could/should be enhanced).

## PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

### Principle 1: Academic Unit Policy for Quality Assurance

**INSTITUTIONS SHOULD APPLY A QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY AS PART OF THEIR STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT. THIS POLICY SHOULD EXPAND AND BE AIMED (WITH THE COLLABORATION OF EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS) AT ALL INSTITUTION'S AREAS OF ACTIVITY, AND PARTICULARLY AT THE FULFILMENT OF QUALITY REQUIREMENTS OF UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES. THIS POLICY SHOULD BE PUBLISHED AND IMPLEMENTED BY ALL STAKEHOLDERS.**

*The quality assurance policy of the academic unit is in line with the Institutional policy on quality, and is included in a published statement that is implemented by all stakeholders. It focuses on the achievement of special objectives related to the quality assurance of study programmes offered by the academic unit.*

*The quality policy statement of the academic unit includes its commitment to implement a quality policy that will promote the academic profile and orientation of the programme, its purpose and field of study; it will realise the programme's strategic goals and it will determine the means and ways for attaining them; it will implement the appropriate quality procedures, aiming at the programme's continuous improvement.*

*In particular, in order to carry out this policy, the academic unit commits itself to put into practice quality procedures that will demonstrate:*

- a) the suitability of the structure and organization of the curriculum;*
- b) the pursuit of learning outcomes and qualifications in accordance with the European and the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education;*
- c) the promotion of the quality and effectiveness of teaching;*
- d) the appropriateness of the qualifications of the teaching staff;*
- e) the enhancement of the quality and quantity of the research output among faculty members of the academic unit;*
- f) ways for linking teaching and research;*
- g) the level of demand for qualifications acquired by graduates, in the labour market;*
- h) the quality of support services such as the administrative services, the Library, and the student welfare office;*
- i) the conduct of an annual review and an internal audit of the quality assurance system of the undergraduate programme(s) offered, as well as the collaboration of the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG) with the Institution's Quality Assurance Unit (QAU);*

### Study Programme compliance

The Department of Civil Engineering complies with the principle. In particular:

- The Dept. has established the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG) and the University operates the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU). The IEG is very active and its policy is in line with QAU;
- The policy applies to all of the Dept. areas of activity;
- The policy is duly published on the webpage of the Dept. (<http://www.civ.uth.gr/tmima/tmima-axiologiseis>).

## Panel judgment

| Principle 1: Institution Policy for Quality Assurance |   |
|---|---|
| Fully compliant                                       | x |
| Substantially compliant                               |   |
| Partially compliant                                   |   |
| Non-compliant   |   |

## Panel Recommendations

The AP would like to recommend the following:

- Linking teaching with research: The faculty is putting a lot of effort to present their experiences and latest research to the students. This is also evidenced from the student interviews. The AP recommends that these efforts are codified in the course information package.



## Principle 2: Design and Approval of Programmes

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD DEVELOP THEIR 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.

*Academic units develop their programmes following a well-defined procedure. The academic profile 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 National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education are described at this stage. The approval or revision process for programmes includes a check of compliance with the basic requirements described in the Standards, on behalf of the Institution's Quality Assurance Unit (QAU).*

*Furthermore, the programme design should take into consideration the following:*

- *the Institutional strategy*
- *the active participation of students*
- *the experience of external stakeholders from the labour market*
- *the smooth progression of students throughout the stages of the programme*
- *the anticipated student workload according to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System*
- *the option to provide work experience to the students*
- *the linking of teaching and research*
- *the relevant regulatory framework and the official procedure for the approval of the programme by the Institution.*

### Study Programme compliance

The Department of Civil Engineering is Compliant with the policy. In particular:

- There is a formal procedure for the design and approval of the programs.
- The Dept. has established the Program of Studies committee which coordinates the efforts and makes suggestions to the General Assembly of the Department.
- The information regarding the program structure is published in the student guide and the webpage of the Department.

## Panel judgement

| <b>Principle 2: Design and Approval of Programmes</b> |   |
|---|---|
| Fully compliant                                       | X |
| Substantially compliant                               |   |
| Partially compliant                                   |   |
| Non-compliant   |   |

| <b>The Accreditation Panel agrees that this Programme leads to a Level 7 Qualification according to the National &amp; European Qualifications Network (Integrated Master)</b> | <b>YES</b> | <b>NO*</b> |
|--|------------|------------|
|  | X          |            |

*\*In case of negative judgement, please justify*

## Panel Recommendations

The AP would like to recommend the following:

- The program Studies committee structure could be expanded to include:
  - Current students;
  - Alumni;
  - Professionals;
  - Representative from the professional organizations (e.g. Association of Civil Engineers);
  - Representative from the Technical Chamber of Greece.
- The proposed members could have the role of the observant (or the advisor) and should not necessarily have a vote.
- Based on the course information packages the weekly student engagement is 60-70 hrs/week which is considered high. Maybe in a future revision of the program the Department could revisit the relation of ECTS with the student engagement hours and consider rationalization of each course so that the number of ECTS correlates with the engagement hours for each student.

## Principle 3: Student- centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment

**INSTITUTIONS SHOULD ENSURE THAT THE 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.**

*Student-centred learning and teaching plays an important role in stimulating students' motivation, self-reflection and engagement in the learning process. The above entail continuous consideration of the programme's delivery and the assessment of the related outcomes.*

*The student-centred learning and teaching process*

- *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 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.*

*In addition :*

- *the academic staff are familiar with the existing examination system and methods and are supported in developing their own skills in this field;*
- *the assessment criteria and methods are published in advance;*
- *the assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary is linked to advice on the learning process;*
- *student assessment is conducted by more than one examiner, where possible;*
- *the regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances;*
- *assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures;*
- *a formal procedure for student appeals is in place.*

### Study Programme compliance

The Department of Civil Engineering is Compliant with the policy. In particular:

- There is a committee with academic advisors;
- There is a welfare service (<http://prosvasi.uth.gr>);
- The faculty use the e-learning platform to assist their teaching;
- The students can address the General Assembly of the Department for suggestions, appeals, etc.
- There is a course evaluation procedure involving the completion of a questionnaire.

## Panel judgement

| <b>Principle 3: Student- centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment</b> |   |
|--|---|
| Fully compliant  | x |
| Substantially compliant  |   |
| Partially compliant  |   |
| Non-compliant  |   |

## Panel Recommendations

The AP would like to recommend the following:

- The course evaluation procedure could be improved in order to be more efficient and ensure the participation of more students;
  - The questionnaire should become smaller. This will be achieved with the development of course specific questionnaires avoiding the general questions. For example a questionnaire related to a course which does not require experimental work, should not include any questions for the laboratories;
  - Find ways to encourage and assist students to complete the surveys. For example require the students to complete the survey (which they could submit blank if they choose to) prior to them being able to see their grades on the system. This could generate issues of anonymity and could be addressed by the software.

## Principle 4: Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification

**INSTITUTIONS SHOULD DEVELOP AND APPLY PUBLISHED REGULATIONS COVERING ALL ASPECTS AND PHASES OF STUDIES (ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, RECOGNITION AND CERTIFICATION).**

*Institutions and academic units need to put in place both processes and tools to collect, manage and act on information regarding student progression.*

*Procedures concerning the award and recognition of higher education degrees, the duration of studies, rules ensuring students progression, terms and conditions for student mobility should be based on the institutional study regulations. Appropriate recognition procedures rely on institutional practice for recognition of credits among various European academic departments and Institutions, in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.*

*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).*

### Study Programme compliance

The Department of Civil Engineering is Compliant with the policy. In particular:

- There is an orientation for new students at the beginning of every academic year;
- Every year there is a presentation of the Departmental divisions (Geotechnical and Geo-environmental Engineering, Structural Engineering, Transport, Transportation and Environmental Management, Hydraulics and Environmental Engineering). The purpose is to aid the students entering the 6<sup>th</sup> semester about the four divisions so they can choose the division of their interest;
- The Department has appointed a Departmental Erasmus officer who informs faculty and students about the Erasmus program and encourages their participation. The mobility is coordinated by the office of the international relations.

### Panel judgement

| <b>Principle 4: Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification</b> |   |
|---|---|
| Fully compliant   | X |
| Substantially compliant   |   |
| Partially compliant   |   |
| Non-compliant   |   |

## **Panel Recommendations**

The AP would like to recommend the following:

- The number of faculty and students participating in the Erasmus program is rather small. The Department should engaged in activities such as information days to promote the advantages of the Erasmus program in order to increase the number of participants.

## Principle 5: Teaching Staff

**INSTITUTIONS SHOULD ASSURE THEMSELVES OF THE QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCE OF THE TEACHING STAFF. THEY SHOULD APPLY FAIR AND TRANSPARENT PROCESSES FOR THE RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE TEACHING STAFF.**

*The Institutions and their academic units have a major responsibility as to the standard of their teaching staff providing them with a supportive environment that promotes the advancement of their scientific work. In particular, 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 recognize 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.*

### Study Programme compliance

The Department of Civil Engineering is Substantially Compliant with the policy. In particular:

- They have clear and fair processes for the recruitment of new staff;
- Follow quality assurance processes for all members;
- Encourage the innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies.

### Panel judgement

| Principle 5: Teaching Staff |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Fully compliant             |   |
| Substantially compliant     | x |
| Partially compliant         |   |
| Non-compliant               |   |

### Panel Recommendations

The AP would like to recommend the following:

- Strengthen the competence of the laboratories to support not only teaching but also high end research;
- Provide financial aid (i.e. adequate budget for conference participation, networking activities for networking and proposal preparation);

- Provide incentives to faculty members to participate in international consortia with increased probability of successful proposals (i.e. reduced teaching effort, provision of teaching assistant, etc.)
- Enhance the supporting staff contribution by hiring competent laboratory assistants (technicians) to support the experimental work;
- Provide incentives for recruitment of highly qualified academic staff (e.g. improve the facilities, administrative support, research management support, etc.).



## Principle 6: Learning Resources and Student Support

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD HAVE ADEQUATE FUNDING TO COVER 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 funding and means to support learning and academic activity in general, so that they can offer to students the best possible level of studies. The above means could include facilities such as libraries, study rooms, educational and scientific equipment, information and communications services, support or 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 or international students, students with disabilities) and the shift towards student-centered learning and the adoption of flexible modes of learning and teaching. Support activities and facilities may be organized in various ways, depending on the institutional context. However, the internal quality assurance ensures that all resources are appropriate, adequate, and accessible, and that students are informed about the services available to them.*

*In delivering support services the role of support and administrative staff is crucial and therefore they need to be qualified and have opportunities to develop their competences.*

### Study Programme compliance

The Department of Civil Engineering is Compliant with the principle. In particular:

- Competent faculty with relevant qualifications to teach the courses of their expertise;
- Friendly environment (as per student interviews) promoting the good relations between faculty and fellow students;
- Teaching rooms equipped with projectors for video presentations;
- There are 10 labs covering the spectrum of the concentrations of the Department;
- There is a competent computer lab;
- The secretariat is adequate;
- The University runs a careers office, an office for international relations, a library; a student welfare service.

### Panel judgement

| Principle 6: Learning Resources and Student Support |   |
|---|---|
| Fully compliant                                     | x |
| Substantially compliant                             |   |
| Partially compliant                                 |   |
| Non-compliant                                       |   |

## **Panel Recommendations**

The AP would like to recommend the following:

- While the computer lab is well equipped, it is only one. The lab is utilized for teaching various courses. At the same time due to security reasons (faculty interviews) the students cannot use the lab during class hours. As a result the availability of the computer lab is limited.
- The recommendation is to create another computer laboratory which will be utilized for the studying needs of the students or resolve the security issues so they can use (if available computers) during class hours;
- Hire competent laboratory assistants to ensure continuous availability in the various laboratories (not only the computer one) of the department.

## Principle 7: Information Management

**INSTITUTIONS 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.**

*Institutions are expected to establish and operate an information system for the management and monitoring of data concerning students, teaching staff, course structure and organisation, teaching and provision of services to students as well as to the academic community.*

*Reliable data is essential for accurate information and for decision making, as well as for identifying areas of smooth operation and areas for improvement. Effective procedures for collecting and analysing information on study programmes and other activities feed data into the internal system of quality assurance.*

*The information gathered depends, to some extent, on the type and mission of the Institution. The following are of interest:*

- *key performance indicators*
- *student population profile*
- *student progression, success and drop-out rates*
- *student satisfaction with their programme(s)*
- *availability of learning resources and student support*
- *career paths of graduates*

*A number of methods may be used for collecting information. It is important that students and staff are involved in providing and analyzing information and planning follow-up activities.*

### Study Programme compliance

The Department of Civil Engineering is Compliant with the principle. In particular:

- The data is collected and processed centrally by the software provided by the University;
- There is an operational e-learning platform (e-class);
- There is an electronic secretariat offering a series of services for the online correspondence with the Departmental secretary.

### Panel judgement

| Principle 7: Information Management |   |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Fully compliant                     | x |
| Substantially compliant             |   |
| Partially compliant                 |   |
| Non-compliant                       |   |

### Panel Recommendations

The AP considers the services adequate.

## Principle 8: Public Information

**INSTITUTIONS SHOULD PUBLISH INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR TEACHING AND ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES WHICH IS CLEAR, ACCURATE, OBJECTIVE, UP-TO-DATE AND READILY ACCESSIBLE.**

*Information on Institution's activities is useful for prospective and current students, graduates, other stakeholders and the public.*

*Therefore, institutions and their academic units provide information about their activities, including the programmes they offer, the intended learning outcomes, the qualifications awarded, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, the pass rates and the learning opportunities available to their students, as well as graduate employment information.*

### Study Programme compliance

The Department of Civil Engineering is Compliant with the principle. In particular:

- The Department maintains an informative webpage ([www.civ.uth.gr](http://www.civ.uth.gr));
- The Department publishes a detailed program catalogue;
- The Department maintains an account in facebook, instagram and twitter;
- Other information is also provided through the main webpage of the University of Thessaly;
- All information is provided in Greek and English.

### Panel judgment

| Principle 8: Public Information |   |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Fully compliant                 | x |
| Substantially compliant         |   |
| Partially compliant             |   |
| Non-compliant                   |   |

### Panel Recommendations

The AP considers the services adequate.

## Principle 9: On-going Monitoring and Periodic Internal Review of Programmes

**INSTITUTIONS SHOULD HAVE IN PLACE AN INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM FOR THE AUDIT AND ANNUAL INTERNAL REVIEW OF THEIR 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 study programmes aim to maintain the level of educational provision and to create 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. Revised programme specifications are published.*

### Study Programme compliance

The Department of Civil Engineering is Substantially Compliant with the principle. In particular:

- The program is up to date addressing the changing needs of the society;
- The program includes a mandatory practical training course;
- The assessment procedures are published in advance and they provide fair assessment;
- The learning environment is suitable for learning with the students and faculty having good relations with mutual respect.

### Panel judgement

| <b>Principle 9: On-going Monitoring and Periodic Internal Review of Programmes</b> |   |
|--|---|
| Fully compliant  |   |
| Substantially compliant  | x |
| Partially compliant  |   |
| Non-compliant  |   |

### Panel Recommendations

The AP would like to recommend the following:

- The student workload is considered overwhelming as per the hours of engagement shown in the computer information packages.
- The Academic program committee should consider revisiting the content of the ECTS and rationalize the ECTS with the relevant student engagement hours.

## Principle 10: Regular External Evaluation of Undergraduate Programmes

**PROGRAMMES SHOULD REGULARLY UNDERGO EVALUATION BY COMMITTEES OF EXTERNAL EXPERTS SET BY HQA, AIMING AT ACCREDITATION. THE TERM OF VALIDITY OF THE ACCREDITATION IS DETERMINED BY HQA.**

*HQA is responsible for administrating the programme accreditation process which is realized as an external evaluation procedure, and implemented by a committee of independent experts. HQA grants accreditation of programmes, 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 template's requirements, and as a catalyst for improvement, while opening new perspectives towards the international standing of the awarded degrees.*

*Both academic units and institutions participate in the regular external quality assurance process, while respecting the requirements of the legislative framework in which they operate.*

*The quality assurance, in this case the accreditation, is an on-going process that does not end with the external feedback, or report or its follow-up process within the Institution. Therefore, Institutions and their academic units ensure that the progress made since the last external quality assurance activity is taken into consideration when preparing for the next one.*

### Study Programme compliance

The Department of Civil Engineering is Compliant with the principle. In particular:

- The Department and University are going through regular external evaluations;
- The Department adopted the recommendations of the previous AP in almost their entirety.

### Panel judgement

| Principle 10: Regular External Evaluation of Undergraduate Programmes |   |
|---|---|
| Fully compliant   | X |
| Substantially compliant   |   |
| Partially compliant   |   |
| Non-compliant   |   |

### Panel Recommendations

The AP would like to recommend the following:

- The recommendation of the previous AP regarding the implementation of prerequisites in the study program was not implemented by the Department for reasons that were explained and are considered reasonable. However it is this AP's recommendation also that the implementation of the prerequisites is necessary and prompts the Department General Assembly to revisit the issue.

## **PART C: CONCLUSIONS**

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

The Study Programme is well described, informative, complete and up-to-date. It contains links to actual research and is supported by appropriate laboratory demonstrations. There are several projects towards active learning and integration of new teaching methods based on IT. The students are motivated and enjoy the advantages offered by a small university: There is an immediacy between staff and students in such a way that a cooperative and friendly atmosphere prevails. The Panel is deeply impressed by the seriousness, motivation and competence of the staff, which is highly devoted to its mission, a fact which not only motivates and inspires the students but also counteracts the several shortages caused by the lack of appropriate substructure (classrooms and laboratory space) and personnel (technicians for the laboratories and office work).

In total, the high quality of educational and research work is maintained not only by an integrated system of formal measures but also by the personal commitment of the involved persons and the spirit of cooperation and mutual service.

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

The Features of Good Practice stated above are endangered by the fact that they do not emanate only from the existing facilities, which are rather poor, but to a large degree from a surplus of work and enthusiasm offered by the staff. However, it should be taken seriously into account that this engagement could lead to fatigue and disappointment if there is no response by fulfilment of the urgent needs and pending improvements. The facilities need imperatively to be improved. Students miss computer labs and appropriate class rooms. E.g., the offices of the staff do not meet the standards of daylight in rooms of permanent work prevailing in other European countries. Clearly, such shortages are a burden and disrupt the attraction of high quality scientists.

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

The completion of the new building in 2022 (the funding of which is born by the European Investment Bank) is mandatory and must be by accomplished. This action will remove the shortages in classrooms, laboratories and computer labs.

The personnel should be enhanced, the present state of one technician for all laboratories is far too insufficient and also the office work is inadequately supported.

#### IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are:

1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 10

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are:

5, 9

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are: none

The Principles where failure of compliance was identified are: none

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

|  |            |           |
|--|------------|-----------|
| <b>The Accreditation Panel agrees that this Programme leads to a Level 7 Qualification according to the National &amp; European Qualifications Network (Integrated Master)</b> | <b>YES</b> | <b>NO</b> |
|  | <b>x</b>   |           |



## The members of the Accreditation Panel for the UGP (Integrated Master) of Civil Engineering of the University of Thessaly

Name and Surname

Signature

1. **Prof. Emeritus Dimitrios Kolymbas**  
Universität Innsbruck, Innsbruck, Austria
2. **Assoc. Prof. Petros Christou**  
Frederick University, Nicosia, Cyprus
3. **Mrs. Athanasia Kapoula**  
Representative of the Technical Chamber of Greece