



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



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Accreditation Report
for the New Undergraduate Study Programme in
operation of:
Culture and Creative Media and Industries

Institution: University of Thessaly

Date: 28 April 2025



Με τη συγχρηματοδότηση
της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης



Πρόγραμμα
Ανθρώπινο Δυναμικό και
Κοινωνική Συνοχή



Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the
New Undergraduate Study Programme in operation of **USP Culture and
Creative Media and Industries** 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 **USP Culture and Creative Media and Industries** 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 George Tzanetakis (Chair)
University of Victoria, Canada
2. Professor Ana Chikovani
Ivane Javakhishvili Tbilisi State University, Georgia
3. Professor Vasilis Kallis
University of Nicosia, Cyprus
4. Professor Anna Tahinci
Glassell School of Art, United States of America
5. Mr Angelos Michail Chouvardas
University of Piraeus, Greece

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

Please refer briefly to the Panel preparation for the new undergraduate study programme in operation review, as well as to the documentation provided and considered by the Panel. State the dates of the site visit and describe the visit schedule and the meetings held. Feel free to mention any additional information regarding the procedure, as appropriate.

In preparation of the external review of the undergraduate study programme (USP) the panel reviewed the documentation provided to us. This documentation included the accreditation report prepared by the USP, the summary provided by the quality assurance unit of the university, the strategic plan for the university, the feasibility study conducted to determine whether the programme should be established, the quality assurance policy of the university, the study guide of the program, various statistics and indicators, and various other documents describing in detail the operation, policies and planning.

The external review took place remotely using video-conferencing on April 28 and April 29, 2025. During these two days, the panel had the chance to conduct productive discussions with faculty, administration, staff, students, and collaborating organizations and learn about the programme. The review of provided materials continued after the visit was concluded and during the writing of this accreditation report. Decisions regarding compliance and the writing of the accreditation report were made with equal participation from each panel member and were unanimously agreed upon through a consensus-building process. The academic unit fully collaborated with the panel during the accreditation process and provided any additional information and clarifications that were requested in a timely and professional manner.

III. New Undergraduate Study Programme in operation Profile

Please provide a brief overview of the new undergraduate study programme in operation with reference to the following: history, academic remit, duration of studies, qualification awarded, employment opportunities, orientation challenges or any other key background information. Also, you may provide a short description of the home Department and Institution, with reference to student population, campus or any other facts, as deemed appropriate.

The undergraduate study programme in Culture and Creative Media and Industries at the University of Thessaly is a relatively new programme that was created in 2019 and hosted in the city of Volos. It belongs to the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. The University of Thessaly was founded in 1984 and currently services 48500 undergraduate students and 6049 graduate students. The programme admits approximately 100 students yearly and has been able to reach that target during its years of operation. Completion of the program takes 4 years with each semester consisting of 30 ECTS (European Credit Transfer System) for a total of 240 ECTS.

The programme addresses the emerging creative economy with a focus on culture that requires multiple skills and knowledge. It focuses more on curation, and producing content rather than technical aspects but provides knowledge of digital tools. The program prepares students for professional roles in the cultural sector, integrating elements of culture, media, politics, and economy. This is a unique programme in Greece and one of the few ones with this specific focus in the world. The large cultural heritage of Greece and the large percentage of the economy that focuses on tourism provide a fertile ground for hiring graduates of the programme.

The programme faced significant challenges during its first years of operations with the Covid pandemic and the catastrophic floods in Thessaly in 2023. The program is interdisciplinary and focuses on culture and practical applications of creative media. More specifically, the programme can be characterized using international standards for higher education (UNESCO ISCED 2013) as follows: 87% interdisciplinary programmes and qualifications involving arts and humanities (0288), 4% audio-visual techniques and media production (0211), 7% fine arts (0213) , and 2% interdisciplinary programmes and qualifications involving education (0188).

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

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

The Department of Culture and Creative Media and Industries (DCCMI) at the University of Thessaly is established in 2019. It presents an interdisciplinary academic model aligned with emerging trends in the cultural and creative industries. The Department offers a four-year undergraduate program designed to prepare students for professional roles in the cultural sector, integrating elements of culture, media, politics, and economy.

From a strategic standpoint, DCCMI operates in full compliance with the University of Thessaly's quality policies, as established by the university's Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP). These policies are harmonized with the institution's strategic planning, internal and external evaluations, administrative planning and reporting, and the decisions of competent governing bodies. This alignment offers a solid foundation for the continued development of the academic unit.

The Department of Culture and Creative Media and Industries adopts an interdisciplinary academic approach that aligns with internationally established scientific fields in Higher Education, as defined by UNESCO's International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 2013). Based on ECTS credit allocation and course content, the Department's Undergraduate Study Programme is primarily (87%) classified in ISCED field 0288: Inter-disciplinary programmes and qualifications involving arts. The remaining 13% is distributed among the fields of: Fine Arts (0213), Audio-visual Techniques and Media Production (0211) and Inter-disciplinary Programmes involving Education (0188). This classification underscores the programme's integrative structure, combining artistic, cultural, and educational components to support a broad academic and professional skill set.

The effective use of technology in educational practice and the provision of support services is observed. The USP offers a significant number of courses aimed at developing students' digital skills. The Department of Culture and Creative Media and Industries, in collaboration with the Departments of Planning and Regional Development and Economics of the University of

Thessaly, offers the Interdepartmental Postgraduate Programme “Tourism and Cultural Planning and Development.” This initiative reflects the Department’s research priorities and its commitment to fostering interdisciplinary academic collaboration.

However, the unit currently faces significant challenges, primarily related to infrastructure, resources, and operational support. While the department benefits from multiple teaching locations in the city of Volos - including the Papastratos complex, the Deligeorgi building, and shared spaces such as the French Institute amphitheater and the Department of Architecture atrium, - these facilities are not always adequate for the growing student population. According to student feedback, there is overcrowding during examinations, and laboratory-based courses lack proper infrastructure and equipment. Students report that classrooms and equipment are insufficient, particularly for hands-on learning, and that this affects the quality of their educational experience.

Additionally, the departmental library is not yet fully operational, although professors do attempt to mitigate the issue by providing necessary materials directly to students. Nonetheless, this gap highlights a broader concern regarding academic support services, which are essential for the sustainability of the department's educational objectives.

In terms of instructional quality, the department shows a strong commitment to interdisciplinary and critical thinking, encouraging students to understand the complex interplay of creativity, economics, and cultural policy. However, without improvements in core facilities and equipment, the ability to sustain and scale the program effectively may be at risk.

II. Analysis

The Department of Culture and Creative Media and Industries demonstrates a clear strategic orientation toward aligning its academic mission with the evolving needs of the job market. This connection is actively supported through the implementation of structured internship programs. This engagement not only enhances student employability but also contributes to the Department’s visibility and relevance in both academic and professional fields.

The Department offers an undergraduate degree programme with a duration of 8 semesters (4 years), which upon completion leads to the award of a unified degree. To obtain the degree, students must successfully complete 40 courses, totaling 240 ECTS credits, allocated at approximately 30 ECTS per semester. The structure of the Programme is defined by the current approved Curriculum and applicable transitional provisions.

In response to the need to support timely student graduation, a recent revision to the curriculum converted the previously mandatory Bachelor's Thesis into a mandatory elective that can be substituted with elective courses. This change reflects a strategic approach to increasing graduation rates while maintaining academic rigor and flexibility in student learning paths.

Despite its strategic efforts and recent enhancements, the Undergraduate Study Program continues to face several challenges. These include a high number of admitted students relative to available resources, a significant administrative burden, and limited public funding for higher education institutions.

A number of structural and operational challenges have been identified that affect the Department's ability to fully implement its academic mission and ensure long-term sustainability. These areas require targeted strategic planning and institutional support:

- **Inadequate physical infrastructure and space allocation** - the Department currently lacks dedicated facilities. Existing classroom and examination spaces are insufficient, resulting in overcrowding - particularly during high-demand periods such as final assessments.
- **Limited laboratory and technical resources** - laboratory infrastructure and access to specialized equipment remain underdeveloped, particularly in support of hands-on and practice-based components of the curriculum.
- **Library is not fully operational** - the university library remains partly functional, primarily due to unresolved infrastructure issues, including lack of electricity and inadequate maintenance following flood damage in previous years.
- **Need for a comprehensive development plan** - a long-term infrastructure and development strategy, including provisions for curriculum expansion and future space and resource requirements, is yet to be fully defined and aligned with secured funding.

The Panel believes that the initial number of 100 students exceeded the Department's available capacities, and reduction of students' numbers may be necessary to ensure the Department can adequately accommodate the students.

A notable strength of the Department is the successful implementation of its internship programme, which is largely funded through the National Strategic Reference Framework (ΕΣΠΑ). This endeavor ensures broad student participation in practical training opportunities, enhances employability prospects, and strengthens the Department's links with industry and cultural institutions.

III. Conclusions

The Department aligns well with the university's strategic goals and promotes an innovative academic vision. However, its long-term success and sustainability depend on addressing current weaknesses in infrastructure, equipment, and academic support services. Focused investment in these areas is essential to support future growth, maintain high academic standards, and fully achieve the Department's mission.

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

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

- Adjust the students' intake
- Improve Physical Infrastructure and Space Allocation
- Enhance Laboratory and Technical Resources
- Prioritize the opening and full functionality of the library
- Pursue external funding opportunities (e.g., national grants, EU structural funds) to support infrastructure and equipment improvements aligned with the department's academic mission.
- Develop a sustainability and development plan for the Department, in collaboration with university administration, to assess the realistic implementation of future initiatives based on student population forecasts. Prioritize strategic investments in infrastructure - particularly in space and laboratory facilities - to meet future academic demands and ensure continued development.

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

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

The Panel was granted access to the relevant Quality Assurance Policy of the Undergraduate Study Programme (USP) through the digital evaluation folder provided in advance (an updated version was sent on April 29, 2025). This folder also included the Department's overall strategic goals and key supporting documents, such as the report of the Internal Evaluation Committee (OMEA) for the academic year 2022–2023, which was approved by MODIP (Ref. 27134/24/ΤΠΔΜΒ – 07/11/24).

In addition, during the presentation by academic staff and the Head of the Department, the Panel received further information on the Department's strategic planning and the operational framework of the programme.

The approach to quality assurance of the Department of Culture and Creative Industries aligns with the Quality Assurance (QA) Policy of the University of Thessaly which exhibits commitment to quality procedures aimed at ensuring effective performance across multiple dimensions. The policy, which is prepared and monitored by the University's MODIP and approved by the Rector's Council (decision 168/12- 10-2021), explicitly addresses the adequacy of the structure and organization of the curriculum, which has been carefully designed to provide students with fundamental and advanced knowledge, fostering academic and professional competencies.

To be awarded the bachelor's degree, students must complete 240 ECTS credits, typically over a period of four years (eight semesters, each comprising 30 ECTS). The four-year curriculum of the USP under review is structured around two main axes: theoretical courses and practical/laboratory courses. The program includes a total of ten (10) core theoretical courses (compulsory), fifteen (15) compulsory laboratory courses, twenty-six (26) elective courses, and four (4) foreign language options, from which students select one. In the seventh semester, students undertake a significant theoretical and research-based project. The curriculum also features a compulsory internship (12 ECTS) which allows students to gain hands-on experience by participating in cultural production activities beyond the university environment.

The curriculum aligns with both the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education, ensuring that the learning outcomes and qualifications match the required standards for creating competitive graduates at both national and European levels.

The QA Policy explicitly promotes the quality and effectiveness of teaching, evidenced by regular evaluations of instructional methods and performance. Student feedback serves as an important source for identifying areas for improvement, with the Department conducting regular reviews of teaching approaches. Furthermore, the qualifications of the teaching staff are demonstrated to be sufficient and robust, with hiring and evaluation procedures adhering to the relevant Greek state laws, ensuring that faculty members possess the appropriate academic and professional credentials. Research quality and quantity are actively supported through various initiatives, such as encouraging faculty to publish regularly, participate in conferences, and collaborate with external researchers and institutions. In terms of the linkage between teaching and research, the Panel's meetings with the USP's stakeholders suggests that the faculty integrates research findings into the curriculum to enhance student engagement and learning relevance. Examples of this include research-based course updates, thesis requirements, and educational activities incorporating the latest advancements in the field.

Learning outcomes are consistently monitored, with the Department ensuring that the qualifications conferred are in demand by the labor market. The compulsory internship program further strengthens students' practical skills, making them well-prepared for employment. The Department's support services, including its administrative staff, library facilities, and student care mechanisms, are organized and effective to the extent permitted by budget constraints. Nevertheless, as reported by students, they play a vital role in supporting students' academic experience. Finally, the QA Policy ensures an annual review and audit of the quality systems.

This is achieved through collaboration between the Internal Evaluation Committee (OMEA) and the University's Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP), with results driving further improvements in teaching and organizational processes.

II. Analysis

The QA Policy for TIIAMB demonstrates a strong commitment to maintaining a high standard across its academic, research, and administrative functions. The structure and organization of the curriculum are clearly adequate, as they align with international and national frameworks and address the needs of students holistically. The focus on learning outcomes that correspond to European and National Qualifications Frameworks ensures that the Department's graduates have well-defined and competitive skills and knowledge. This is further supported by the implementation of robust teaching strategies and feedback mechanisms, which promote continuous adjustment and improvement of instructional quality.

The academic rigor and effectiveness of the teaching staff are evident in the Department's systematic approach to recruitment, evaluation, and training. Ensuring faculty qualifications through structured processes ensures that the quality of education remains consistent over time. Similarly, the active promotion of research output strengthens the Department's academic standing, as well as contributes to its reputation for innovation and scholarly excellence. Notably, the focus on integrating teaching and research improves the overall educational experience for students and helps them develop critical thinking and research-oriented skills, further enhancing their postgraduate and professional opportunities.

III. Conclusions

The Department of Culture and Creative Industries at the University of Thessaly operates an effective and well-structured Quality Assurance Policy that reflects its dedication to academic rigor and improvement. Key strengths include the alignment of its curriculum with national and European frameworks, the focus on teaching quality and faculty qualifications, and the commitment to integrating teaching and research activities. Support services, including administrative functions, libraries, and student care, further enhance the academic environment. Furthermore, the systematic annual review process ensures that quality assurance mechanisms are regularly updated and refined through collaboration between the Internal Evaluation Group and the Quality Assurance Unit.

The Department would benefit from more systematic tracking of specific performance indicators, particularly in areas such as graduate employability and research output, to better assess the long-term impact of their efforts. Finally, enhanced communication of the QA Policy's benefits to all stakeholders, including students and external collaborators, would ensure broader engagement and understanding of the importance of quality assurance practices.

In conclusion, the Department's QA Policy is comprehensive, addressing all required dimensions, such as curriculum adequacy, graduate outcomes, teaching and research integration, and support services.

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

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

- The Department of Culture and Creative Industries urgently needs to enhance its faculty, administrative staff, facilities, and equipment. The Panel recognizes that this need is fully controlled by state budgetary policy
- The Department would benefit from more systematic tracking of specific performance indicators, particularly in areas such as graduate employability and research output, to better assess the long-term impact of their efforts.

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

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

The establishment of the USP has followed a clearly defined and structured procedure. Its curriculum was developed by a special committee appointed by the University in accordance with the provisions of Law 4589/FEK 13/A/29-1-2019. In designing the curriculum, the committee recognized the importance of establishing connections with social, cultural, and production-related entities relevant to the Department's areas of focus (namely, the cultural and creative industries). To that end, it consulted with various stakeholders operating within the broader field of the cultural economy — including museums, libraries, archives, and artistic and cultural organizations — and also sought input from faculty members with expertise in related academic fields.

Based on these consultations and research, the curriculum was structured around the following key pillars:

- The combination of theoretical and applied knowledge and skills
- The provision of interdisciplinary knowledge and theoretical training in the broader fields of cultural studies and cultural management
- The development of specialized skills in the areas of image management, audiovisual media, video production, and visual arts practices
- The acquisition of digital competencies, particularly in designing digital applications with cultural content and managing audiovisual and visual material
- The active engagement of students in the learning process

At its core, the programme outlines its academic profile, identity, and orientation, with an emphasis on responding to contemporary educational priorities and market needs. The design process integrated key components such as objectives, subject areas, the structure and organization of coursework, expected learning outcomes, and intended professional qualifications. These align with the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education, ensuring compliance with established educational standards. An important innovation in the programme is the structured integration of courses designed to develop digital skills, addressing an essential requirement in today's creative economy.

The institution has also considered employment prospects for graduates and labour market needs within the cultural and creative industries. The programme explicitly focuses on equipping students with interdisciplinary knowledge, encompassing both theoretical foundations and applied skills. Digital competencies, such as the development of cultural digital applications and the management of audiovisual content, are integral components of the curriculum and reflect the growing demand for such skills across various sectors. These courses are complemented by more traditional areas of study, such as cultural and visual arts, creating a well-rounded educational experience.

The structure of the programme supports smooth progression throughout its stages. It is divided into three main types of courses: core courses, workshop-based learning, and electives. Core courses introduce students to foundational knowledge during the early

semesters, while workshops progressively specialize and apply this understanding to real-world challenges. Elective courses allow students to tailor their education to their specific areas of interest, offering further depth and flexibility. The incorporation of the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) ensures that anticipated student workloads are appropriately balanced.

To attain a degree, students are required to complete a total of 240 ECTS over eight semesters, with each semester carrying 30 ECTS. The Program's curriculum, which is structured around two primary axes - theoretical courses and practical/laboratory courses - contains:

- a total of ten (10) core theoretical courses (compulsory),
- fifteen (15) compulsory laboratory courses,
- twenty-six (26) elective courses, and
- four (4) foreign language options, from which students select one.

In the seventh semester, students undertake a significant theoretical and research-based project, a sine qua non for the student who select the undergraduate thesis option that runs at the final eighth semester. Note: students who opt out of the thesis option are required to take three additional courses. The curriculum also features a compulsory internship (12 ECTS) which connects students via a hands-on experience with the professional world.

The structure and content of the curriculum reflect a strong emphasis on an interdisciplinary academic approach, in alignment with internationally recognized fields of study in Higher Education, as outlined in UNESCO's International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED 2013). An analysis of ECTS allocation and course content shows that 87% of the undergraduate programme's courses fall under ISCED category 0288 – Interdisciplinary programmes and qualifications involving arts and humanities. Additionally, 7% are classified under Audio-visual techniques and media production (0211), while 4% and 2% correspond to Fine arts (0213) and Education (0188), respectively.

An additional strength of the programme is the provision of work experience through a mandatory internship. This feature enables students to apply their learning in professional environments, strengthening their connections to the labour market and enhancing their employability. Furthermore, the linking of teaching and research is evident, with students gaining exposure to research activities through research-integrated coursework and access to institutional research initiatives. This connection bridges academic theory with professional application, aligning students' learning outcomes with current trends and methods in the cultural and creative fields.

Finally, the programme's initial design incorporated an international perspective through - as documented in "Annex B4: Feasibility and Sustainability Studies" - benchmarking against similar programmes abroad, ensuring its competitiveness on a global scale. However, on a national level, it fills a distinct gap, as there are no directly comparable programmes in higher education. The Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) has verified compliance with relevant regulatory requirements during the approval process.

II. Analysis

The programme reflects a systematic approach to design and development, addressing the requirements outlined in the Standards. Its academic profile and objectives are clearly

articulated, emphasizing interdisciplinary knowledge, the cultivation of transferable digital skills, and alignment with market demands in the creative economy. This alignment underscores the programme's relevance, as it prepares students for professional roles within the cultural and creative sectors.

The structure and organization of the programme effectively facilitate the smooth progression of students. The layered system of core courses, workshops, and electives provides a logical flow from foundational knowledge to specialized competencies. Additionally, compliance with ECTS ensures that student workload is carefully managed, fostering a balanced and sustainable academic experience.

Digital skills acquisition is a particularly strong element of the programme, marking progress in aligning with contemporary educational needs. Courses dedicated to the management of digital media and the creation of digital applications ensure that students are equipped with essential competencies for navigating a rapidly digitizing industry. This digital emphasis not only enhances the employability of graduates but also positions the programme as forward-thinking and innovative.

Work experience, provided through the internship component, is another key strength of this programme. By integrating practical learning with academic coursework, it ensures that students are prepared to transition effectively into the workforce. The linkage of teaching and research further adds value, exposing students to the latest trends and methods within relevant disciplines.

Despite these strengths, ongoing curriculum revision remains an area requiring more clarity. While the programme was designed with input from external experts, cultural stakeholders, and academics, there is limited evidence of a detailed procedural framework for periodic curriculum updates. A robust mechanism for curriculum revision that involves feedback from students, graduates, and industry professionals would further enhance the programme's adaptability and relevance.

The programme's international benchmarking confirms its alignment with global best practices in the field. Given its uniqueness on the national level, it would benefit from regular comparisons with international counterparts to ensure continued alignment with global standards. The development of partnerships with foreign institutions could foster further innovation and collaboration.

The Panel wishes to highlight the Department's ability to evaluate, assess, and revise the program's curriculum in response to challenges emerging from both the educational process and developments in the field. To date, the curriculum has undergone two revisions, each implemented in a way that safeguarded the program's sustainability while strengthening its overall coherence and integrity.

III. Conclusions

This undergraduate programme represents a well-conceived initiative that aligns with both institutional strategy and labour market demands. A key strength lies in its interdisciplinary approach, which combines theoretical knowledge with digital and applied skills. The integration

of ECTS, the inclusion of mandatory internships, and the emphasis on research-informed teaching all support the smooth progression of students and their transition to the workforce. Graduates are uniquely positioned to contribute to the cultural and creative economy, an area with increasing global significance.

However, the programme would benefit from institutionalizing a detailed and transparent process for periodic curriculum revisions. Establishing mechanisms for gathering regular feedback from all relevant stakeholders - including students, alumni, and employers - would strengthen its ability to adapt to emerging trends and maintain alignment with market needs. Continued emphasis on benchmarking, combined with international collaboration, would further enhance its position as a competitive and innovative programme.

In conclusion, the programme demonstrates robust alignment with the Standards and makes a valuable contribution to higher education by addressing contemporary educational and professional demands. By taking the recommended steps to refine and enhance its processes, the institution can ensure that the programme continues to meet and exceed expectations in an evolving academic and professional landscape.

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

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

- The Panel acknowledges that the Department complies fully with the provisions of Principle 3.
- Place greater emphasis on the curriculum's integrity and capacity to support the Program's goals, as the latter would benefit from institutionalizing a detailed and transparent process for periodic curriculum revisions.

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

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

The Undergraduate Study Programme (USP) in Culture and Creative Media and Industries at the University of Thessaly demonstrates a structured and evolving commitment to student-centred learning, teaching, and assessment. A range of teaching methodologies is employed, tailored to the nature and objectives of individual courses, including lectures, laboratory sessions, group fieldwork, real-case project work, micro-teaching, and educational visits. Digital learning environments (e-class) and open lectures further contribute to flexible learning.

Academic advising is institutionalised and designed to support students throughout their studies. Advisors provide guidance on academic progression, internship placements, Erasmus mobility, postgraduate pathways, and access to support services, such as the PROSVASI unit for students with learning difficulties or disabilities.

Assessment methods reflect the program's interdisciplinary and applied focus. Assignments address both historical and contemporary cultural issues, encouraging students to engage critically and creatively with topics such as trauma and collective memory, symbolic capital and gentrification, and the transformation of museums in community contexts.

Student feedback is systematically collected via an electronic questionnaire during the 9th–10th week of each semester. The questionnaire, developed by the Internal Evaluation Group (OMEA) and tailored to the departmental profile, includes 19 questions. Aggregated and anonymised results are presented to the Department Assembly and used in the Department's annual internal evaluation. Detailed course-specific results are shared confidentially with instructors after the September examination period.

The Department also fosters inclusion and sensitivity to diversity. It collaborates closely with the Equal Access Unit of the university, encouraging staff and students to engage with disability studies and related themes in coursework and final theses. Two recent undergraduate theses have focused on disability and neurodiversity. Female student participation in feedback and evaluation processes is actively promoted through informal consultations, in-class evaluations conducted with lecturers absent, and discussions in student assemblies.

Formal and informal procedures are available to students wishing to raise academic concerns or complaints, with escalation routes through academic advisors, department committees (including the Ethics Committee), and the Rectorate.

II. Analysis

The Department's educational approach is clearly aligned with student-centred principles, balancing structured academic support with the promotion of student autonomy and engagement. The use of varied pedagogical methods—especially project-based learning grounded in real-world cultural challenges—indicates a strong commitment to active learning. This is further reinforced by the integration of social relevance into course content and assessments, particularly in areas like public space, trauma, identity, and inclusion.

The system of academic advising is a notable strength, offering personalised guidance across multiple dimensions of the student experience. Likewise, the cooperation with university-wide support structures such as the Equal Access Unit enhances inclusive education practices.

The evaluation of teaching is thorough and appropriately timed to allow mid-course feedback and post-semester review. The dual structure of generalised reporting for departmental planning and confidential feedback to instructors supports both transparency and individual pedagogical improvement.

The Department demonstrates a thoughtful, context-sensitive approach to promoting student voice, particularly through informal assessments, group discussions, and exceptional

assemblies. This indicates responsiveness to student needs and a culture of mutual respect between staff and students.

While mechanisms for complaint handling are in place and clearly articulated, the extent to which feedback leads to concrete curriculum adjustments could be further elaborated in future reporting for greater clarity.

III. Conclusions

The Undergraduate Study Programme (USP) displays a strong and maturing student-centred orientation. Through its integration of diverse teaching methods, interdisciplinary content, structured academic support, and active student feedback mechanisms, the Department cultivates an environment that encourages student autonomy, inclusivity, and critical engagement.

The presence of a detailed evaluation framework, alongside informal and participatory feedback channels, reflects an institutional culture that values dialogue and continuous improvement. Ongoing collaboration with support units and attention to vulnerable groups reinforce the programme's commitment to equity and respect for diversity.

Future enhancement could focus on making more explicit the link between student feedback and the adaptation of teaching or curricula. Nonetheless, the Department has clearly embedded the core values of student-centred education and is committed to their ongoing development in practice.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

- The Panel acknowledges that the Department complies fully with the provisions of Principle 4.

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

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

The Undergraduate Study Programme (USP) in *Culture and Creative Media and Industries* at the University of Thessaly outlines clear and detailed regulations governing all aspects of the student academic journey, from admission to graduation. These regulations are published and accessible through institutional documentation and the Student Guide.

Admission and registration procedures are consistent with national legislation, and students are required to complete a minimum of eight semesters of study. The structure of the curriculum includes core, laboratory, and elective courses, all assigned European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) points. The total requirement for graduation is 240 ECTS, aligning with European standards.

The curriculum enables students to tailor their academic path by selecting elective courses from defined thematic areas. Notably, the programme offers the option of completing either a diploma thesis (18 ECTS) or a set of three smaller projects within elective courses, also totalling 18 ECTS. Practical training is an integral and compulsory component, accounting for 12 ECTS.

Grading follows a 0–10 scale, with 5 as the minimum passing mark. The grading is categorized into three levels: *Excellent* (8.5–10), *Very Good* (6.5–8.49), and *Good* (5–6.49).

The programme supports international academic cooperation, as exemplified by its participation in a Blended Erasmus Project with institutions in France and Belgium. This triangulated partnership facilitates academic mobility and cross-cultural educational experiences, aligning with the goals of the European Higher Education Area and the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

A Diploma Supplement is issued automatically to all graduates, as confirmed by the President of the academic unit, providing transparency on qualifications, learning outcomes, and the academic context of the degree.

II. Analysis

The programme demonstrates robust and comprehensive academic governance in relation to student admission, progression, and qualification recognition. The structure of the curriculum, with its systematic allocation of ECTS, adherence to an eight-semester study cycle, and inclusion of core, elective, and practical components, reflects strong alignment with both national and European academic frameworks.

The strategic participation in international academic collaborations, such as the QueerRing Ecologies initiative under Erasmus+, further enriches the educational environment and promotes mobility and intercultural engagement. This commitment reinforces the department's responsiveness to the Bologna Process and its values.

The programme's dual pathway for degree completion—through either a thesis or elective projects—demonstrates flexibility and inclusivity, accommodating diverse student strengths and learning preferences. Moreover, the consistent application of the ECTS credit system and

the transparent grading scheme enhance the reliability and comparability of academic performance across institutions.

Recognition of qualifications is handled in line with international conventions, and the systematic issuance of the Diploma Supplement adds considerable value in terms of graduate transparency and employability. The curricular design and academic framework ensure that students are well-supported throughout their studies, from orientation and course selection to graduation and mobility opportunities.

A minor area for improvement is the need for a more unified and easily navigable presentation of the regulations and graduation requirements within the digital Student Guide, which would further support student autonomy and institutional transparency.

III. Conclusions

The Undergraduate Study Programme in *Culture and Creative Media and Industries* fully meets the expectations of Principle 5. It has implemented a well-structured and internationally aligned academic framework that governs student admission, progression, and degree award. The use of ECTS, the issuance of the Diploma Supplement, and the support for mobility reflect best practices in higher education.

To enhance the student experience further, the academic unit could consider refining the accessibility and structure of regulatory and informational material in digital formats.

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

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

- The Panel acknowledges that the Department complies fully with the provisions of Principle 5.
- Enhance the digital Student Guide by presenting graduation requirements and academic regulations in a more unified and user-friendly format.

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

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

As of today, the new USP has 9 faculty members: 2 Associate Professors, 4 Assistant Professors (tenured), 3 Assistant Professors (non-tenured), alongside 2 EDIP (one with a PhD), 1 ETEP (with a PhD), 11 adjunct lecturers, 2 K-12 educators (with a PhD), and 3 administrative staff. 1 DEP position is open and will get fulfilled shortly.

Teaching staff are employed following the Greek legislative framework, which requires that posts are advertised and sets out a fair and transparent process. The conditions of employment recognise the importance of teaching, research (and artistic practice), and administration/service. The workload of teaching, research and administration staff is defined by legislation; however, it is also dependent on the specificities of context – in this case, the small number of faculty, combined with the practice-based nature of many of the modules, results in heavier than average teaching workloads for academic and administration staff. Faculty are offered opportunities for professional development. There are also opportunities for teaching mobility through Erasmus+ and BIP (Blended Intensive Programmes). Faculty are evaluated by students using Module Evaluation Questionnaires (MEQs).

II. Analysis

The panel studied the profiles of the teaching staff and concluded that they have interdisciplinary expertise as is appropriate to cover the theoretical and practical needs of the USP. Some faculty members and external teaching staff are artists with established practice, which is appropriate to the applied nature of the USP.

All members of the teaching staff are fully committed to their teaching, research, and practice. This is also evident through individual outputs, which include publications but also through the academic and artistic activities which teaching staff organise or contribute to. Despite significant budget cuts and challenges, faculty members and students have developed remarkable initiatives (such as the exhibition *"Treasures of the Pietro Bellasi and Katerina Papageorgiou Bellasi Collection"* at the Giorgio de Chirico Centre in Volos in December 2024-January 2025) to promote art-based research, cultural heritage, open knowledge and artist-community synergies that are shaping the cultural life of the city of Volos and of the entire region of Thessaly. Workshops (including summer workshops), study days, colloquia and symposia promote the professional development of the teaching staff and allow students to be actively involved and acquire experience and expertise.

Faculty members of the Department of Culture and Creative Media and Industries participate in the following research projects:

1. 2024-2026, *European Schools of Care*, Visual Culture and Curating Lab, Associated partner Call: CREA-CULT-2024-COOP-1, (Creative Europe 2021-2027)
2. 2022-2025, *Care Ecologies*, Centre of New Media and Feminist Public Practices, (Creative Europe 2021-2027): <https://www.careecologies.art/en/>
3. 2021-2023, *Olive Heritage for Sustainable Development: Raising Community Awareness of Living Heritage*, (Joint Programming Initiative on Cultural Heritage and Global Change (JPI CH)/ Horizon 2020): <https://www.heritageresearch-hub.eu/project/olive4all/>
4. 2020-2022, *ANTISOMATA (Antigones: Bodies of Resistance in the Contemporary World)*, Department of History, Archaeology and Social Anthropology, ELIDEK: <https://antigones.gr/>
5. 2018-2021, *Center of New Media and Feminist Public Practices*, University of Thessaly, ELIDEK: <https://www.centrefeministmedia.arch.uth.gr/>
6. 2021-, *Citizens of Photography: The Camera and the Political Imagination*, PhotoDemos: <https://citizensofphotography.org/>

The geographic location of the Programme in Central Greece is a great asset for further development of offerings such as summer programmes and/or workshops. The study of themes like oral history are meaningful for the development of a strategy of research and creativity that can further contribute to assess the identity and future directions of the Programme for both undergraduate and graduate studies. The development of life-long learning offerings can further enhance the links between the Programme and the city of Volos and the region of Thessaly.

The existing YouTube channel of videos (<https://www.youtube.com/@DepartmentOfCultureAndNewMedia>) can further promote those events and the achievements of students in order to enhance the visibility of the USP locally, nationally and internationally.

III. Conclusions

Teaching staff have valuable credentials, experience, and expertise. Their recruitment is fair and transparent, and they should be given all the necessary resources for their training and further professional development to fulfil the mission of the new USP.

The AP finds that the USP fully complies with this Principle and recommends increasing the number of tenured faculty members teaching in the new USP to guarantee its future sustainability. The panel feels that the Programme should be offered sufficient funding to support art-based research, conference attendance, and other scholarly and artistic activities that enhance and accelerate artistic creativity, research and scholarly development.

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

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

- The panel recommends increasing the number of tenured faculty members, especially with the prospect of graduate studies.
- The panel feels that the Programme should be offered sufficient funding to support art-based research, conference attendance, and other scholarly and artistic activities that enhance and accelerate artistic creativity, research and scholarly development.

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

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

The facilities of the Department are located in three different locations within the city of Volos, that include the Papastratos Complex, the Deligeorgi Building, and two shared spaces (the French Institute Amphitheater and the Department of Architecture Atrium).

There are two laboratories:

1. CDM (Culture and Digital Media) Lab: <https://cdmlab.cult.uth.gr/>
2. VCC (Visual Culture and Curating) Laboratory: <https://vcclab.cult.uth.gr/>

The Department also has facilities, such as studios, educational and scientific equipment, classrooms, as well as administrative services and offices for faculty.

There is competent administrative staff to ensure the smooth operation of the student support services. The University of Thessaly has an Office of Student Affairs, a Career Office and a Psychological Counseling Center. The Student Adviser offers students information and guidance and assists them to better organize their studies based on their background and interests (advice focuses on: course selection, use of departmental resources, final thesis subject, postgraduate and professional prospects). The Student Adviser also informs and directs students to other university services, such as the Office of Student Affairs, the Career Office and the Psychological Counseling Center. The adviser's role is to support students throughout their studies and help them accomplish their academic and professional aims.

II. Analysis

The Department is spread out in three different locations within the city of Volos, that include the Papastratos Complex, the Deligeorgi Building, and two shared spaces (the French Institute Amphitheater and the Department of Architecture Atrium). Access from one location to the other is possible on foot (10-15 minutes), by bicycle, scooter, or car. There is no dedicated space for intellectual interaction and exchanges between students.

The Department currently lacks dedicated facilities and there seems to be a lack of adequate space, especially during end-of-semester exams. There is also a need for more updated technological equipment. Existing classroom and examination spaces are insufficient, resulting in overcrowding.

The two laboratories (CDM Culture and Digital Media Lab and VCC Visual Culture and Curating Lab) are vital for the students' learning needs but technical resources are limited. Laboratory infrastructure and access to specialized equipment remain underdeveloped, particularly in support of hands-on and practice-based components of the curriculum.

To support learning and academic activity, the Department had a specialised Library, that flooded during Storm Daniel in September 2023. Since then, the USP got an agreement with the Popular Library of Volos for students to have access three times a week for two hours each day and organized a lending library with books that belong to faculty. Electronic book titles are available via eclass. The Library needs to become fully operational again, including for electricity and adequate maintenance after flood damage repairs are completed.

III. Conclusions

There is a vital need for more adequate physical infrastructure and space allocation. Laboratory and technical resources are limited and would benefit from more funding. The Library needs to become fully operational again. As a conclusion, the AP found that the USP substantially complies with principle 7.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

- There is a vital need for more adequate physical infrastructure and space allocation.
- Laboratory and technical resources are limited and would benefit from more funding.
- The Library needs to become fully operational again.

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

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

There are several tools that are used for information gathering by the USP. The quality assurance computer system of the University of Thessaly as well as the quality assurance systems of the Hellenic Quality Assurance Authority (HQAA) play a central role. There is also material gathered by the department secretary as well as the instructors.

The collection of information for the students of the USP is done through an integrated computer system for managing student information developed for the University of Thessaly as well as a department portal. These systems enable the monitoring of progress of a student from their entry until their graduation. They can be accessed by students, instructors, and staff. The software covers specifying which courses to take, recording of grades, calculations of metrics, issuing of certifications and scholarships etc. The system can also be used to calculate various statistics (for example percentage of students who graduate) and metrics that are used to inform the internal and external reviews. This is a unified system created for quality assurance monitoring across the University of Thessaly.

The same system is used to collect data about the faculty members of the unit. The collected information is provided during internal and external reviews in tables covering aspects such as the number of publications and other types of research output, awards and recognitions, citations etc.

The department also monitors the evolution of the field of study and the market to inform the program study guide. Interviews with faculty and students are conducted to inform decision making. The last two weeks of each semester electronic questionnaires are provided to the student to provide feedback about their classes and the results are collected and analyzed by the quality assurance committee of the programme as well as the corresponding units at the university level. The collected data about the faculty is used for promotion and tenure reviews by the corresponding committees.

Information about the facilities, labs, and student services are collected by the faculty using a unified quality assurance information system. The collected information is recorded for internal and external reviews and used to inform procurement.

The analysis of all the collected information is performed by the quality assurance committee and then presented in a faculty meeting. This analysis and subsequent discussion is used to inform decision making and taking actions to respond to the evolving needs of the programme.

II. Analysis

Overall, the accreditation panel was well satisfied by the department's performance and efforts in this principle. It is evident that the mechanisms in place work well and that all stakeholders are committed to actively participate. The system is dynamic and is reviewed regularly and methodically.

III. Conclusions

The programme is fully compliant in this Principle. The self-assessment procedure of the programme takes place annually with provisions for the outcomes of the self-assessment to be properly recorded and submitted to the QAU/MODIP of the Institution. The department clearly values the process and is planning to take concrete actions to address any of the issues raised by the internal evaluation process.

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

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

The institution fully embraces quality assurance mechanisms and reviews and revises these on a frequent and regular basis. We encourage the programme to continue on this trajectory of self-reflection and development. In the future it will be important to keep track of how the internal review process leads to concrete actions and provide examples for future accreditation reviews.

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

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

There is a dedicated segment in the Department's website regarding the Undergraduate Study Program (USP) in Culture and Creative Media and Industries. For promotional purposes, a bilingual website was developed, offering content in both Greek and English. The information on the website currently is available in Greek and English versions, where the Greek webpage is more informative.

II. Analysis

The key information regarding the academic unit and the USP is available online through the webpage of the Department: <https://cult.uth.gr/>. The information in English language is available on the website's English version: <https://cult.uth.gr/en/>. Admittedly, it is easy to change the language of the website, as there is a dedicated symbol (flag icon) to make the change.

The Department's website provides comprehensive information, including its homepage, profile, fields of study, academic structure, administrative staff, quality assurance,

Undergraduate, Postgraduate, and Doctoral programmes, as well as academic and laboratory personnel, research laboratories, publications, research projects, creative activities, and general information. Details such as the teaching timetable, USP course offerings, internship programme, and mobility opportunities are clearly presented, accurate, and regularly updated.

However, information on scheduled events and departmental activities is currently available only in the Greek version of the website, which limits accessibility for non-Greek-speaking users. Additionally, key documents and regulations are also provided exclusively in Greek, highlighting the need for broader bilingual availability.

Enhancing the USP's website by incorporating additional information on graduate career prospects - such as alumni testimonials and professional achievements - would further strengthen the programme's visibility and attractiveness to prospective students.

III. Conclusions

The USP's website is clear, up to date, and user-friendly in terms of content and structure. Expanding the English-language content to fully match the Greek version would further enhance the programme's visibility and accessibility to an international audience.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

- Enrich the Greek version of the USP website.
- Include alumni testimonials and career outcomes on the USP website to boost visibility and attract prospective students.

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

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

The department has a quality assurance committee that is responsible for the writing of the yearly internal audit and review of the programme. Together with the quality assurance unit of the University they are responsible for this yearly annual review. In addition it monitors and administers the completion of questionnaires and surveys for courses and instructors. The findings are presented to the department and discussed. They are also used to inform study guide updates. The quality assurance committee also is responsible for collecting all the metrics and indicators required for internal and external reviews.

There are several stages in this process. At the end of September there is a department meeting in which the yearly review and study guide revisions are discussed and considered. There is discussion of what has been accomplished and what are the goals for the new academic year.

Starting in November data is collected for the purposes of review. At the end of the spring term there are meetings with stakeholders to discuss possible changes and discuss future strategy. The yearly internal review is completed, presented to the department, after discussion approved and sent to the quality assurance unit of the University.

II. Analysis

Overall, the accreditation team was satisfied with the department's performance and efforts in terms of internal quality assurance processes and review. It is clear that the mechanisms in place are working well and that all stakeholders are committed to active participation. The system is dynamic and is reviewed regularly and methodically. Important decisions such as making thesis writing optional and providing an alternative option of taking 3 courses have taken place informed by this process.

III. Conclusions

The University fully complies with quality assurance as well. The program's self-evaluation process is carried out annually with the provision that the results of the self-evaluation are properly recorded and submitted to the Foundation's QAU/MODIP. Self-assessment findings are shared within the academic unit and beyond, and self-assessments result in evidence-based action plans.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

The USP is fully compliant with this principle, even taking steps beyond the guidelines. The institution also fully embraces quality assurance mechanisms and reviews and revises these on a frequent basis, either annually. We encourage the USP and University to continue on this trajectory of self-reflection and development.

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

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

This is a relatively new undergraduate study programme and therefore there has not been a previous external panel review for the purposes of accreditation. The University of Thessaly which hosts the programme was successfully externally reviewed in 2015 and a detailed report showing compliance with the accreditation and enumerating progress based on the suggestions of the external review was provided to the review panel. The provided documentation both at the institution level and at the usp level is thorough and shows good institutional knowledge about the process of accreditation.

The academic unit that delivers the USP has a plan in place to address any suggestions/recommendation arising from the external review. The following stages will be followed:

1. The findings of the external review will be discussed by the quality assurance unit and the University administration.
2. The quality assurance unit of the USP will review the report and suggestions and recommend to the department concrete actions to address them.

3. After discussions in a department meeting the recommendations will be grouped into two categories: A) actions that can take place directly by the department and B) actions that require support from the University and the Ministry of Education.

II. Analysis

The undergraduate study programme is undergoing the first external review. The host institution has a good track record with external reviews and accreditations of other units and programmes and this shows in the preparation of the material for this review.

III. Conclusions

The undergraduate study programme is fully compliant to this principle given that it is a new study programme. We encourage the programme, the department, and the university to continue engaging with the process of external review and accreditation.

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

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

The panel recommends that the undergraduate study programme continues to engage with the external review and accreditation process as dictated by the Hellenic Quality Assurance agency.

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

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

Not applicable

II. Analysis

III. Conclusions

Panel Judgement

Principle 12: Monitoring the transition from previous undergraduate study programmes to the new ones	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

Not applicable

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

Please state aspects of good practice identified, with regard to the new undergraduate study programme in operation.

- A significant number of courses aimed at developing students' digital skills.
- Successful implementation of internship programme
- The Department's actions indicate a commendable degree of flexibility and adaptability, which allow it to increase its ability to achieve its goals
- Stakeholders and the national market view the Department of Culture and Creative Industries rather positively and they place trust in its ability to provide well educated and skilled graduates
- The system of academic advising is a notable strength, offering personalised guidance across multiple dimensions of the student experience.
- Information gathering for accreditation purposes is taken seriously and used to inform decision making.
- There are clear procedures for admission, student progression through the program, and graduation, following standard practice in Greece and the European Union more generally.
- It is clear that both the current students and the alumni of the programme highly value what they learned, and have high respect for the faculty members.

II. Areas of Weakness

Please state weak areas identified, with regard to the new undergraduate study programme in operation.

- Inadequate physical infrastructure and space allocation to some extent understandable given the flooding that the University of Thessaly experienced
- Negatively-impacting ratio between faculty and students (overwhelming numbers of students for faculty)
- Limited laboratory and technical resources
- Library is not yet fully functional
- Need for a comprehensive development plan

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

Please make any specific recommendations for development.

- Adjust the students' intake to have a better faculty/student ratio
- Improve Physical Infrastructure and Space Allocation
- Enhance Laboratory and Technical Resources
- Prioritize the opening and full functionality of the library
- Pursue external funding opportunities (e.g., national grants, EU structural funds) to support infrastructure and equipment improvements aligned with the department's academic mission.

- Develop a sustainability and development plan for the Department, in collaboration with university administration, to assess the realistic implementation of future initiatives based on student population forecasts. Prioritize strategic investments in infrastructure - particularly in space and laboratory facilities - to meet future academic demands and ensure continued development.
- Enrich the Greek version of the USP website.
- Include alumni testimonials and career outcomes on the USP website to boost visibility and attract prospective students.
- Increase the number of tenured faculty members, particularly in view of the expansion into graduate studies.
- Ensure adequate funding to support art-based research, conference participation, and other scholarly and creative activities that foster artistic and academic development.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are:

1,2,3,4,5,6,8,9,10,11

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are:

7

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are:

The Principles where failure of compliance was identified are:

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

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname

Signature

- 1. George Tzanetakis**
- 2. Ana Chikovani**
- 3. Vasilis Kallis**
- 4. Anna Tahinci**
- 5. Angelos Michail Chouvardas**