



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



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for Higher Education

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Accreditation Report for the Undergraduate Study Programme of:

Primary Education

Institution: University of Western Macedonia

Date: 9 October 2021



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



Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the Undergraduate Study Programme of **Primary Education of the University of Western Macedonia**, 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 Undergraduate Study Programme of **Primary Education of the University of Western Macedonia** comprised the following four (4) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

- 1. Prof. Emeritus Athanasios Gagatsis (Chair)**
University of Cyprus, Cyprus

- 2. Prof. Mary Ioannidou-Koutselini**
University of Cyprus, Cyprus

- 3. Prof. Leonidas Kyriakides**
University of Cyprus, Cyprus

- 4. Prof. Panayota Y. Mantzicopoulos-James**
Purdue University, United States of America

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

Due to travel restrictions and lockdowns, the accreditation of the Undergraduate Programme on Primary Education of the University of Western Macedonia was conducted fully in a remote mode, using the Zoom teleconferencing platform. The Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (HAHE) provided the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel (EEAP) members with a packet of materials ahead of the review process that included: The Department's Accreditation Proposal, a Quality Assurance Policy Document, Quality Assurance Goals, and Quality Data, as well as a wealth of supportive material and appendices. The Department further provided the EEAP with the accreditation file and appendices for easy access, as well as additional supportive material including videos, samples of student work, course assignments, practicum assignments, student theses, and faculty scholarship samples. The Panel was also provided with HAHE's accreditation guidelines and was invited to attend an orientation session before the accreditation visit.

The EEAP met as a group before the accreditation teleconferences to plan ahead, coordinate division of work and process to be followed, and discuss issues that emerged from the preliminary study of the material at that point.

The virtual accreditation visit extended over three days, starting on October 4th, 2021. We first met with Prof. Nikolaos Sariannidis, Vice-Rector of Academic Affairs and President of MODIP and with Assoc. Prof. Ioannis Thoidis, Head of the Department. We then met with OMEA and MODIP representatives to discuss the degree of compliance of the programme to the Quality Standards for Accreditation. On the second day of our virtual visit, we met with teaching staff members, as well as with students. We were also given an on-line tour of the classrooms, lecture halls, libraries laboratories, and other facilities and we then discussed the facilities presented in the video produced for this purpose. Finally, we met with graduate students and discussed their experience of studying at the Department and their career path. During the third day of our visit, we met with employers and social partners and discussed their relations with the Department. All three days were concluded with debriefing meetings with EEAP members only. During the third day of the visit, we met also with OMEA and MODIP representatives and addressed several points/findings which needed further clarification.

From the very beginning, the Department of Primary Education (DPE) of the University of Western Macedonia (UOWM) welcomed us with warmth, collegiality and openness and they were all eager to answer our questions and address our concerns. Their presentations were very informative, emphasizing the University's commitment to quality improvement in teaching, research and community outreach. A good number of faculty attended our meetings, a sign of involvement in departmental affairs.

During our online visit we met with members of the leadership, faculty members and administrative-support staff, current students and alumni as well as community partners. From our interactions and conversations with these representatives we recognized that the Department takes its commitment to quality assurance seriously, constantly working towards greater compliance with the HAHE quality standards.

III. Study Programme Profile

The Pedagogical Department of UOWM was founded in 1989 as a branch of the Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki. In 2004 the Department was transferred to the newly (2003) established University of Western Macedonia. In 2019 the School of Social Sciences and Humanities succeeded the Pedagogical School. Every year, 150 -175 new students enrol in the Department through the system of the National Entrance Exams. In the period of 30 + years of its operation (1990-2020), the Department has had 1996 graduates.

The programme of studies of the Department of Primary Education (DPE) includes semester courses, School and Work Experience and an optional Bachelor Thesis. For the graduation, at least eight (8) semesters of study are needed. The European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) is used, with a total student workload being 30 ECTS per semester. For graduation, two hundred and forty (240) ECTS (8 semesters X 30 ECTS/semester = 240 ECTS) are needed. <http://eclass.uowm.gr/modules/auth/opencourses.php?fc=9>.

The Department defines the aims of the Primary Education as follows: (a) cultivate and promote the Educational Sciences through academic and applied teaching and research; (b) supply graduates with adequate theoretical knowledge and practical skills, necessary for their scientific and professional development; (c) address and contribute to the resolution of educational issues; and (d) contribute to the on-going need for citizens' education and training.

During the meeting with the President and the department's staff, the DPE's aims were further analysed into the following main objectives: the provision of high-standards education, student-centered learning, improvement of the programme's revision procedures, and research promotion. Students are expected to get the best education for becoming competent and caring primary educators and for having the knowledge and experience to work in alternative settings.

The academic profile and orientation of the programme, the objectives, subject areas, structure and organization, expected learning outcomes, and intended professional qualifications align with the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education and the guidelines of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). Regular review and revision of the programme is conducted. The process involves students and faculty to ensure that the content and the learning outcomes are up to date. The last comprehensive revision of the programme was based on the 2014-15 External Evaluation Report.

The DPE has a prominent role in Western Macedonia. This is demonstrated through ongoing collaborations with the neighbouring countries, research on the History of Western Macedonia and on Teaching Greek as a Second Language to Greek communities abroad, the innovative work in the Laboratories, and the extra-curricular, outreach activities that enrich the educational and cultural environment of the area.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

Principle 1: Academic Unit Policy for Quality Assurance

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

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

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

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

The DPE of the UOWM has in place a Quality Assurance (QA) system that seeks to ensure that the structure and operation of the DPE program is consistent with several fundamental criteria. Specifically, the QA policy is subsumed under the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education and is in accordance with the UOWM QA policy. The MODIP

and OMEA, in consultation with the DPE and input from external stakeholders, regularly review the curriculum to ensure optimal conditions for teaching and learning. The EEAP verified that clear objectives are established to implement, measure, and ascertain the effectiveness of the critical program mission of achieving the best learning outcomes in a pervasive “student-centered” and democratic learning program milieu.

The OMEA conducts regular reviews of program operations that include input from all parties involved: faculty, students, administrators of field experience and practicum sites, and community partners – both local and national. Data from a variety of sources provide useful information to analyse for programme and curriculum reform, as warranted. For example, the QA includes but is not limited to collecting student evaluations of courses. The surveys allow students to assess every critical course and programme characteristic needed to achieve the mission of the department. It is important to note here that the department has managed to substantially increase the response rate to the student questionnaire, and this can partly be attributed to the systematic efforts made by all members of MODIP and OMEA to communicate to students that the feedback received, is used to improve the quality of their program of study. The overall mission of the DPE is to prepare their graduates to become researchers and professional practitioners who:

1. Understand the basic concepts and theories of education and are familiar with research methodologies (pedagogical training).
2. Acquire the necessary theoretical knowledge for the courses included in the curriculum, while also being introduced to the methodology of these courses.
3. Develop teaching skills across all courses taught in primary education.

The EEAP review of the OMEA’s QA Policy confirmed that faculty members consistently reviewed and adapted course content, instructional and research strategies, and mentored field experiences that helped students link theory to practice.

The EEAP has verified that the DPE has worked closely with MODIP and OMEA during the past several years since the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) report. The DPE has worked with the OMEA (Internal Evaluation Group) and all faculty to ensure that the QA Policy and management plan is implemented. It is important to note that the OMEA collects significant program operation data that are used to identify areas of need for action. In addition, OMEA collects and analyses key indicators about the required and elective courses (including syllabi student evaluations of courses and program), faculty productivity (including quality of publications), external funding, conferences, collaborations, enrolment figures, and graduation rates. OMEA has established a very good monitoring system and the EEAP was impressed by the rich data set that is kept (including information about the research productivity of each faculty member) and the willingness of the DPE to share the data with us. The EEAP was also impressed by the fact that each faculty member has to provide data on his/her research activities which are expected to be used in order to develop his/her own action plan. Monitoring of the implementation of these action plans also takes place at the end of each academic year.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Articulate future goals and objectives including, but not limited to, a research policy.

Principle 2: Design and Approval of Programmes

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD DEVELOP THEIR UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES FOLLOWING A DEFINED WRITTEN PROCESS WHICH WILL INVOLVE THE PARTICIPANTS, INFORMATION SOURCES AND THE APPROVAL COMMITTEES FOR THE PROGRAMME. THE OBJECTIVES, THE EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES, THE INTENDED PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND THE WAYS TO ACHIEVE THEM ARE SET OUT IN THE PROGRAMME DESIGN. THE ABOVE DETAILS AS WELL AS INFORMATION ON THE PROGRAMME'S STRUCTURE ARE PUBLISHED IN THE STUDENT GUIDE.

Academic units develop their programmes following a well-defined procedure. The academic profile and orientation of the programme, the objectives, the subject areas, the structure and organisation, the expected learning outcomes and the intended professional qualifications according to the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education are described at this stage. The approval or revision process for programmes includes a check of compliance with the basic requirements described in the Standards, on behalf of the Institution's Quality Assurance Unit (QAU).

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

The program of primary Education at the University of Western Macedonia is well structured and conforms to the European Standards and Guidelines. The student workload follows the *European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System*.

The programme's design is consistent with the principles of high-quality programmes and the European Standards and Guidelines. It is characterized by flexibility and a student-centered approach. The programme is staffed by qualified and research-oriented personnel and supported by adequate resources and laboratories. Students choose from a pool of elective courses and attend mandatory courses that foster the development of their ability to teach the primary school curriculum effectively. Along with providing students with a strong academic orientation, the coursework attends to students' interests and personal talents and equips them with skills needed to work in alternative contexts. The programme of studies at the DPE includes 53 semester courses, of which 30 are mandatory and 26 are electives, and a School and Work Experience programme that lasts 7 semesters. A Bachelor Thesis (ptychiaki ergasia) is optional. (<http://eclass.uowm.gr/modules/auth/opencourses.php?fc=9>).

Five institutional laboratories (Local History, Pedagogical Applications, Mathematics of the Nature and Life, Education in Sciences and Sustainable Development, Art) and two more

laboratories in Creative Writing, and Linguistics, give students the opportunity to apply theoretical knowledge to innovative projects and to participate in research-oriented activities and strategic collaborations with the neighbouring countries.

During meetings with the EEAP, students and graduates voiced their self-confidence in developing and implementing new ideas, and in working for the promotion of educational values in competitive work environments.

The courses are well allocated to the faculty who teach two courses per semester. Seven Departmental Committees, 4 interdepartmental programmes, 3 post graduate programmes, 53 PhD candidates, along with other responsibilities in the Department, including academic mentoring, increase the staff's administrative burden. However, the Department is supported by 5 administrative staff, 2 technicians, 2 external partners for scientific and technical support, 8 employees under contract, pursuing academic experience in teaching, and 5 fellows on scholarship. Moreover, the Department employs 5 Special Scientific Personnel (EDIP) and 1 Technical staff.

The School Experience Programme (practicum) is divided into three distinct phases. The first phase, which takes place in the third semester, supports the theoretical courses with systematic classroom observations. A number of public primary schools cooperate with the university and host students in their classrooms. The second phase, which begins in the fourth semester and ends in the seventh, includes the separate teaching of each of the nine primary school subjects. Four of the nine courses for the teaching of these subjects are compulsory: (i) Teaching the Modern Greek Language (ii) Teaching History, (iii) Teaching Mathematics (iv) Teaching Physics. Students must also select two out of the other five elective courses in the fifth and sixth semesters: (i) Teaching Religion, (ii) Teaching Art, (iii) Teaching Music, (iv) Teaching Physical Education, (v) Teaching Elements of Environmental Education. The remaining three electives are optional. The third and final phase takes place in the eighth semester and students teach and effectively manage a school class for a period of six days.

The collaboration of the Department with stakeholders and the willingness of schools and centers beyond the district of Florina to interact with the Department in mutually supportive ways, provide students with rich experiences and promote positive attitudes towards the profession and their pedagogical role. Thus, students begin as observers, move on as participant observers, and subsequently engage in the design and implementation of lesson plans. A number of students have the opportunity to participate in the Extended Practicum, a Work Experience Programme ("Dievrimeni Praktiki Askisi"), which lasts two months.

The Student Guide articulates the rationale and delivery methods of the programme of study, including learning objectives, assessment methods and the operation of the Practicum (School Experience Programme).

Panel Judgement

Principle 2: Design and Approval of Programmes	
Fully compliant	✓
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- Some courses should be delivered in both Greek and English so that the DPE can attract visiting professors from the international academic community and encourage foreign students to study at the DEC through the Erasmus program
- The University should take measures, as part of its human resources management policy, for better balancing the department's development and the staff's increasing workload.

Principle 3: Student- centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD ENSURE THAT THE UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES ARE DELIVERED IN A WAY THAT ENCOURAGES STUDENTS TO TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN CREATING THE LEARNING PROCESS. THE ASSESSMENT METHODS SHOULD REFLECT THIS APPROACH.

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

The student-centred learning and teaching process

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

In addition:

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

Study Programme Compliance

The Department favours student-centered teaching, learning, and assessment, due to the pedagogical background of the faculty and the remarkable work of the laboratories where students implement theories and apply their skills in valuable projects. Student-centered learning is also supported by the use of multiple teaching aids and methods that range from traditional lectures to individual or group work, experiential methods, and laboratory projects. The student-centered approach of the Department is also evident throughout the website, the Study Guide, and the e-class where students can find all the necessary information for the

smooth progression of their studies. Also, students' participation in extra-curricular activities and events in the community reflect the Department's attention to both education and personal, mental wellbeing.

Students' different abilities, learning needs and learning opportunities are taken into consideration when conducting educational and assessment activities. The Office of Disability Support Services provides differentiated support to students with disabilities. Additionally, the Department and University include a number of student-support services such as the Office of Students' Complaints, the Personal Advisor of Studies, Mentorship in the School Experience, and the Guide of Technography, which provides guidance on writing the Bachelor Thesis. The Department promotes students' wellbeing and works to create a supportive and encouraging learning environment, the results of which are apparent in students' self-confidence, gratitude to the Department and their teachers, and finally to the successful careers of the graduates.

The quality of teaching has been the subject of serious concern both in the Department and the institution. In response, MODIP and OMEA developed regulations and criteria in order to recognize the faculty's Teaching and Research efforts. Evaluation has a double dimension: it concerns the level of knowledge acquisition by the students and the evaluation of the educational work conducted by the instructors themselves. The course evaluations indicate that methods are clear to students in advance and courses usually include a combination of assignments, participation, attendance and exams. Additionally, there is an online Student Evaluation Questionnaire, which gives the opportunity for students to assess the instructors' quality of teaching and support provided to students. In 2020 the students' participation in the Questionnaire was 64%, a considerably high percentage.

Finally, the development of the 'Graduates' Community' is a new departmental initiative which has been supported by the graduates who voiced their willingness to actively participate and renew their relations with the Department, the staff, and their activities.

Panel Judgement

Principle 3: Student-centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment	
Fully compliant	✓
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

None.

Principle 4: Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification

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

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

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

Graduation represents the culmination of the students' study period. Students need to receive documentation explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed (Diploma Supplement).

Study Programme Compliance

The DPE's admission policies and procedures of recognition and certification are regulated by the Ministry of Education of Greece. Students are enrolled in the program through the "Panhellenic" examinations given at the end of each school year. All aspects of the admission process are clearly specified within the relevant documents of the department. In order to graduate, a student needs to follow the rules and regulations for relevant courses. These are again clearly provided on the webpage. Students have to earn 240 ECTS, as previously mentioned. For each semester, they earn approximately 30 ECTS. Students are also informed about the structure and stages of their studies from a variety of sources: from the Course Outlines, Study Guide, the University's Website and the Undergraduate Study Regulations.

The Erasmus student mobility program includes clear criteria for participation. Those individuals who have a priority of participation are clearly mentioned in the regulations. It is also pointed out that there is a flexibility on the "recognized courses" within the Erasmus mobility program. The EEAP noted that the DPE has established collaborations with a large number of universities from various countries. However, financial support of students is limited and other ways to support the Erasmus students should be identified.

During the interviews with students and graduates of the DPE, the EEAP found out that that one of the Department's notable strengths is the close collaboration of faculty and students. Students and graduates stated the willingness of faculty and staff to support them in their careers and academic pursuits. They were also satisfied with the feedback they have been receiving on their progress. Graduates also mentioned that after their graduation, faculty members provided support and gave them advice which they found useful for their career development.

Panel Judgement

Principle 4: Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification	
Fully compliant	✓
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

None.

Principle 5: Teaching Staff

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

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

Overview

Currently, the Department of Primary Education (DPE) at the UOWM comprises 38 instructional staff. Specifically, there are 19 DEP members, a number that has remained relatively stable over the years of this evaluation and comprises 12 Full Professors, 3 Associate Professors, and 4 Assistant Professors. Additionally, two DEP and one EDIP staff from the Department of Early Childhood Education, contribute to teaching DPE courses in the areas of mathematics, arts and the development of pedagogical materials, and digital education.

The DPE also includes 6 Specialized Teaching and Laboratory Staff (EDIP and ETEP; Eidiko Didaktiko kai Ergastiriako Prosopiko) and 13 Specialized Teaching Staff (EDP; Ektakto Didaktiko Prosopiko). Five instructional staff were hired to meet the teaching and/or laboratory needs that emerged as a result of the pandemic.

Given the total number of active students in the department (N = 495), the ratio of DEP members to undergraduates is 1:26, whereas the ratio of instructional staff to undergraduates is 1:13. To some extent, these indices reflect opportunities for smaller class sizes and for students to receive individual attention and guidance from the faculty during their studies. The latter was enthusiastically affirmed, during the scheduled EEAP interviews, by current students and programme graduates alike.

Scholarly Activity

The Department is home to 5 institutional laboratories that include the: (a) History lab (focused on local history); (b) Nature and Life Mathematics (MathsLife) lab; (c) [Laboratory for Science](#)

[and Sustainability Education](#); (d) Laboratory of Visual Arts; and (e) Pedagogical Applications. There are additional labs on creative writing and linguistics, music, as well as a Bibliologieion – a lab focused on all aspects of books (e.g., their morphology, aesthetics, and production) as valuable cultural tools. All laboratories have links to the community and are involved in outreach. They thus provide: (a) valuable expertise in the development of diverse community activities related to the topical focus of each lab; (b) opportunities for teacher education students to be involved in the development and delivery of instructional materials and activities beyond the classroom context.

From a scholarly perspective, the work produced in the DPE laboratories is impressive and fundable and has been recognized with awards both at the national and European levels. The labs produce curriculum materials that include (but are not limited to):

- mathematics textbooks for the elementary school that have been nationally adopted for use in Greek elementary schools;
- teacher resources and guides for teaching discipline-specific content (e.g., physical and biological science);
- archival historical artifacts and resources for specific subpopulations and historical periods that are available for research and teaching purposes.

As a group, the DEP faculty are productive scholars who contribute to the knowledge base in their respective disciplines through authoring books, textbooks, and book chapters, publishing in refereed journals, presenting in refereed conferences, and securing funding for their projects from a variety of sources. It comes as no surprise that the faculty are frequently cited in the literature for their work.

A stated goal of the DPE is to increase research and external funding. Evidence that the DPE is meeting this goal is gleaned from the number of funded research projects that has steadily increased since 2015-16, as have the number of competitive, EU grants. DPE faculty serve as Principal Investigators on over 50% of the funded projects. Faculty are also sought for their expertise as external collaborators in other projects. It should be recognized, however, that potential barriers to research productivity are systemic inflexibilities (i.e., the teaching and administrative loads are non-negotiable because they are mandated by national legislation). At the same time, it is also important to acknowledge that the DPE provides faculty with resources that include alerts for new proposal calls and assistance with the technical aspects of the proposal development so that faculty may focus primarily on the scholarly aspects of their submissions.

Professional Development and Mentoring

Faculty development opportunities exist through exchange programs with 28 other Institutions of Higher Education primarily through ERASMUS agreements. Additional collaborations have been launched between individual faculty and/or labs with institutions in Asia and the United States. With respect to ERASMUS, the opportunities are short in duration (2-day) and relatively limited. Although faculty from non-Greek institutions have participated in teaching activities at UOWM, the duration of their involvement has been approximately one week.

An important incentive for faculty development is the distribution of the Department's budget according to concrete criteria that take into account the number of: (a) DEP, EEP, and technical

staff; (b) refereed publications in the department and ratio of publications/DEP member; (c) citations; (d) externally funded projects headed by DEP faculty; (e) number of undergraduate students; (f) time-to-degree completion; (g) labs housed in the Department; (h) graduate programs and number of graduate students/year.

Additional faculty incentives include recognition for both teaching and scholarship and are intended to reward and promote excellence in the Department. Nonetheless, because these incentives are new, it is important that the DPE provide careful consideration of the criteria used. For instance, student evaluations, that are currently used to recognize faculty for their teaching, may need to be supplemented by additional evidence (e.g., syllabi, lecture materials, products created by students, curricular materials such as textbooks, and other innovations).

The DPE does not have a formal mentoring program for faculty development.

Innovation in Teaching Methods and Use of Technologies

Faculty employ digital technologies, as evidenced by their preparedness and efficacy in moving to a remote, online learning environment due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Faculty and students use the e-class platform for their courses and report that they are very satisfied with this system. The IT lab, that is staffed by an EDIP faculty, provides ongoing guidance and support to faculty and students alike.

Both students and programme graduates commented on the faculty's commitment to their students, the timely faculty responses to students' questions, and the series of teaching simulations that the faculty used in their courses during the pandemic. The collaborations with public schools, including an Experimental School (Peiramatiko Scholeio) provide opportunities for faculty to not only teach about innovative methods to their undergraduates but also instantiate them in the public-school setting. In a similar vein, the Extended Practicum provides opportunities for students to expand their teaching skills beyond formal, elementary school contexts and engage in instructional activities in informal settings (libraries, national parks, museums, etc).

Programme graduates referenced the excellent training they received at the DPE. They specifically noted that their knowledge and overall professional preparation: (a) were comfortably on par with those of students from other Greek or European programs; (b) contributed to their employability; and (c) enabled them to tackle diverse and challenging teaching tasks.

Processes for Recruiting, Attracting, and Promoting High Quality Faculty and Staff

The Department is well positioned to attract qualified faculty for reasons that include the Department's openness, interest in innovation, strong productivity, collaborative spirit, established scholarly networks, vibrant undergraduate and graduate programs, and strong history of collaboration with the community and the public schools. Based on the information we received about the DPE Labs, it seems that they may serve as hubs that would attract new as well as potentially established scholars with similar disciplinary foci. Thus, to strengthen the visibility and status of the Department, it may be helpful to plan strategically for new positions around specific areas expertise that will complement the already existing expertise in the unit.

However, given the current national system of higher education, the Department may have limited autonomy in implementing its strategic planning in this area.

Panel Judgement

Principle 5: Teaching Staff	
Fully compliant	✓
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

The Panel recommends that the Department:

- continue to use the stated incentives and monitor their effectiveness with respect to faculty productivity as reflected by external indicators (e.g., refereed publications, externally funded projects) already collected by the Department and MODIP;
- monitor the consequences (for faculty and students) of the process use to recognize excellence-in-teaching;
- consider creating a Teaching Award that is reflective of the multifaceted aspects of excellence in teaching and is based on multiple indicators of teaching effectiveness.
- consider developing a formal mentoring program for faculty and staff.

Principle 6: Learning Resources and Student Support

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD HAVE ADEQUATE FUNDING TO COVER TEACHING AND LEARNING NEEDS. THEY SHOULD –ON THE ONE HAND– PROVIDE SATISFACTORY INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES FOR LEARNING AND STUDENT SUPPORT AND –ON THE OTHER HAND– FACILITATE DIRECT ACCESS TO THEM BY ESTABLISHING INTERNAL RULES TO THIS END (E.G. LECTURE ROOMS, LABORATORIES, LIBRARIES, NETWORKS, BOARDING, CAREER AND SOCIAL POLICY SERVICES ETC.).

Institutions and their academic units must have sufficient funding and means to support learning and academic activity in general, so that they can offer to students the best possible level of studies. The above means could include facilities such as libraries, study rooms, educational and scientific equipment, information and communications services, support or counselling services.

When allocating the available resources, the needs of all students must be taken into consideration (e.g. whether they are full-time or part-time students, employed or international students, students with disabilities) and the shift towards student-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. However, the internal quality assurance ensures that all resources are appropriate, adequate, and accessible, and that students are informed about the services available to them.

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

Study Programme Compliance

Because of the pandemic, the evaluation meeting was conducted online. Therefore, the Panel did not visit the campus facilities in person. However, information was provided by the Department about the setting via photographs and videos of the campus and its buildings: faculty offices, library, laboratories, pedagogical archives room, classrooms, and gym. Beyond the campus structures, [17 Primary Schools](#) are additional facilities in the community that serve as sites for the student-teaching experiences (Practicum). Of these schools, the Experimental Primary School of Florina has a signed Cooperation Agreement with the DPE about scholarly and outreach activities beyond the required 3-phase student-practicum, described earlier in this report. The cooperation agreement addresses participation in research and professional development activities, and the development and implementation of workshops for parents and the community. Not only faculty, but DPE students are likely to benefit from new opportunities that will emerge from this agreement.

In all, the information reviewed by the EEAP along with interviews with faculty, students, and graduates indicate that the resources of the UOWM and the DPE are appropriate, adequate, and accessible to all students. The UOWM and DPE websites are one of the primary sources of information for students. All those who participated in the EEAP reviews reported that the website is excellent and offers detailed information about the program and services available to students. The e-services available to students are varied and clearly detailed in the main UOWM webpage <https://noc.uowm.gr/www/services/>. In addition, the Department webpage has a main option (accessible from the Homepage) that includes links to student-specific guidelines, policies, and services. Beyond programme-relevant guides and information, the webpages

describe the roles of the Student Advocate and Academic Advisor and include information on support services for vulnerable social groups and for students with special needs. The website also provides a link to the students' association that, according to student reports, is an important source of information and support in the department.

During the interview with the EEAP, the students mentioned that the electronic platform (e-class), used in each of their courses, is an additional and very useful resource that helps them monitor their progress on course assignments. It contains information about all aspects of their courses, including the content and methods used, grading, earning bonus points, etc. In addition, students and programme graduates repeatedly mentioned that the faculty were attentive to their needs and responded quickly to student questions/concerns.

Although students were very enthusiastic about the level of guidance provided and available tools and resources, they noted that it would be very helpful to them if the schedule of classes for each semester were available much earlier than it currently is. The students mentioned that they typically have just a week to make their course selections and that this short period of time is not sufficient for effective planning. Early availability of the schedule would enable them to plan better both with respect to their coursework and other curricular and extracurricular activities.

Additional supports for students' learning at the DPE are Academic Counsellors and Mentors who are assigned to students and advise them on the academic and practicum aspects of their studies. DEP faculty serve as Academic Counsellors, whereas Mentors are tasked with student supervision and support during the student-teaching experience (Practicum). Both students and program graduates expressed high levels of satisfaction with the communication and guidance they received from their Counsellors and Mentors. Together, these resources contribute to the timely progress of students in the program and may gradually minimize the number of inactive students (loimnazontes foitites) who currently represent 10% of the DPE student body.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Consider publishing the schedule of classes earlier, in the middle of the previous semester, if possible, to facilitate student curricular and extra-curricular planning.

Principle 7: Information Management

INSTITUTIONS BEAR FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR COLLECTING, ANALYSING AND USING INFORMATION, AIMED AT THE EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT OF UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES OF STUDY AND RELATED ACTIVITIES, IN AN INTEGRATED, EFFECTIVE AND EASILY ACCESSIBLE WAY.

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

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

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

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

The DPE of the UOFWM aims to provide students with theoretical knowledge, research and critical thinking skills, and practical training in Primary education, in accordance with the European and the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education. The EEAP has determined that the Department has established a multidimensional process about its information management that informs internal and external evaluation and accreditation processes. At the university level this is done through MODIP. At the Department level, this is done by the OMEA, the internal evaluation committee made up of faculty members from diverse disciplinary fields within the department and by the Chairman and the General Assembly (Geniki synelefsi) of the Department. OMEA, based on the system of quality management of MODIP, collects data through surveys, quantitative and qualitative information from faculty and lab directors regarding the content and mode of instruction, research and teaching activities, and community outreach. Particular attention is paid to indicators concerning the quality of the education provided and students' satisfaction, the students' performance and the timely completion of studies, the internationalization of the Department, and the availability of learning resources.

The main website of the UOWM, is very user friendly and easy to navigate and provides a wide variety of information about the University including:

- information on the Rectorate Authorities and the Senate of the University;
- an analysis of the facilities of the Schools and Departments distributed in five cities of the Region of Western Macedonia (Kozani, Florina, Kastoria, Grevena, Ptolemaida);
- internal evaluations and the external evaluation of the ADIP (2014);
- indicators of the effectiveness of teaching and research (<https://uowm.gr/>).

In addition, the main page mentions the Vision, the Mission of the Institution, and the Strategic Objectives set by the Senate of the University. Through hyperlinks, visitors can browse the websites of the Schools, Departments, and various services available at the University.

The MODIP website, <https://modip.uowm.gr/nfe/> provides a variety of information about the role and the objectives of MODIP, relevant legislation, quality assurance bodies, curriculum vitae of the teaching staff, internal regulations, certification procedures, evaluation reports, relevant announcements and information, as well as internal and external evaluations. MODIP reviews at regular intervals and at least annually, the main pages of the Institution and each Departments in order to update critical data such as, curriculum guides, evaluation of the teaching work, news and announcements, etc. The aforementioned websites are systematically maintained and updated. In the context of the internal evaluation process, MODIP, evaluates the adequacy, clarity, objectivity, and accessibility of the information provided by the Institution's websites. Finally, the Department's Student Guide, written and/or updated on a daily and/or weekly basis, contains substantive information on the program-of-studies, human resources, and Department activities.

It was reported that internal evaluations take place regularly and students are asked to provide feedback on their courses and teaching staff every semester. The OMEA and the Chairman of the Department monitor the teaching evaluation process and the relative scores. In cases where an instructor's evaluation scores are low, the OMEA and the Chairman of the Department contact the instructor and have a confidential discussion with him/her about the evaluation as well as about further actions aimed at improvement. An honourable mention is given by the Department to the instructor with the highest evaluation marks in the undergraduate and postgraduate programs of study. The Senate attributes an honourable mention to the Department that each semester has the highest score/performance average in the evaluation. Departments are advised to announce, if they deem it appropriate, the average teaching evaluation ratings on their website. By Senate decision 9-2-2021, 30% of the total budget will be distributed to the Departments according to the educational performance of each Department, as these are reflected in the biannual students' evaluations of the teaching.

The EEAP had access to course evaluation tabulations and examined sample questionnaires used for course evaluations. Specifically, information is collected and evaluated on a variety of quality indicators, including the following: follow-up of the course; workload in relation to the study; transparency in grading criteria; faculty guidance and openness; teaching ability and

faculty consistency. Further, these data are directly shared with the information system of MODIP.

The students gave feedback to the EEAP indicating that they value and rate very highly the information provided by the DPE. They also reported that they believed that the courses they have taken prepared them well for the job market/workforce and have provided them with a good understanding of the connections between theory, research, and practice. They expressed satisfaction with the variety of topics offered in the DPE.

The Alumni who participated in the review with the members of EEAP, enthusiastically commented on their strong connections with the Department and noted that they felt welcomed to participate in educational opportunities (e.g. events, symposia, conferences, seminars, co-authored papers, PhD programs). They also expressed appreciation that their training emphasized theoretical, practical and research directions.

The EEAP found that some graduates continue their careers as researchers or as postgraduate students in Greece, while others work as teachers in public or private schools in and outside Greece. This was regarded by all interviewed as important since it increased the bond and sense of community among students, as well as faculty and graduates, thus supporting the potential for future collaborations, teaching opportunities and availability of practical experiences.

Overall, the EEAP believes that the level of satisfaction reported on the surveys and the decisions being made following the analysis of the available data is sufficient.

Panel Judgement

Principle 7: Information Management	
Fully compliant	√
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

None.

Principle 8: Public Information

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

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

The EEAP finds that the UOWM and the DPE have put in place a comprehensive public information system. This determination is based on reviews of printed and electronic sources, as well interviews with the Head of the Department, members of MODIP, OMEA, faculty, secretarial staff, and students. The EEAP examined materials that exhibited evidence of critical information sharing with students, faculty members, external partners, and the community at large. The main website of the UOWM (<https://uowm.gr/>), is very user friendly and easy to navigate and provides a wide variety of information about the University, including announcements and press releases of a general nature, publication of scholarships, competitions, and jobs. The website is frequently updated and incorporates all the actions of the Institution resulting from strategic planning such as special interest clubs for students, internal regulations etc.

The University is committed to social accountability and to the proper and impartial information-sharing with all stakeholders. The publication of notices, decisions, activities and actions of the University at all levels of its operation were an integral part of the Institution's operation, in accordance with relevant legislative provisions. In addition, basic information is provided across all levels of study (undergraduate, postgraduate, doctoral), as well as on particularly important information for students, such as student care (food - housing - medical care), transfers, internships, lifelong learning, etc. At the same time, the human resources as well as the responsibilities of each administrative department are mentioned along with contact information.

The Department's [website](#) provides links for Greek- and English-language speakers and contains information about its facilities, staff, undergraduate and graduate programs and guides, announcements, events, policy of quality assurance, and internal assessment reports. News about awards, as well as the activities of members of the academic community (conferences, workshops, announcements, distinctions, trainings) are also posted on the Department's website. Information of interest to the general public such as invited lectures, workshops, conferences and other events that connect the Department with the community is posted on

the DPE website and published in the press. The content of the page is constantly updated including all recent decisions and announcements.

To serve stakeholders faster and reduce bureaucracy, several special web applications have been implemented and are being used:

- electronic applications for accommodation;
- student Information System Curricula;
- staff cooperation platform (synergy.uowm.gr);
- e-applications for financial support, transportation, accessibility;
- system of electronic applications for expression of interest in practical training by students;
- system of electronic applications of PhD holders for the acquisition of academic experience in the framework of the implementation of European project actions etc.

In closing, the EEAP commends the DPE on its excellent initiative to publish a newsletter on educational and cultural issues, intended to reach interested parties beyond the boundaries of the local community of Florina and Western Macedonia. This is reflected in the first issue of the bulletin (May-July 2021) that appears on the Department's website (eled.uowm.gr).

Panel Judgement

Principle 8: Public Information	
Fully compliant	√
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

None.

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

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD HAVE IN PLACE AN INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM FOR THE AUDIT AND ANNUAL INTERNAL REVIEW OF THEIR PROGRAMMES, SO AS TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVES SET FOR THEM, THROUGH MONITORING AND AMENDMENTS, WITH A VIEW TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT. ANY ACTIONS TAKEN IN THE ABOVE CONTEXT SHOULD BE COMMUNICATED TO ALL PARTIES CONCERNED.

Regular monitoring, review and revision of study programmes aim to maintain the level of educational provision and to create a supportive and effective learning environment for students.

The above comprise the evaluation of:

- *the content of the programme in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up to date;*
- *the changing needs of society;*
- *the students' workload, progression and completion;*
- *the effectiveness of the procedures for the assessment of students;*
- *the students' expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme;*
- *the learning environment, support services and their fitness for purpose for the programme*

Programmes are reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders. The information collected is analysed and the programme is adapted to ensure that it is up-to-date. Revised programme specifications are published.

Study Programme Compliance

The DPE draws from the Quality Policy of the University, giving particular importance to the internal evaluation of courses. There is continuous monitoring and periodic internal evaluation of the Programme, as was evident during the interviews with the faculty and internal evaluation committee (MODIP and OMEA) members. OMEA meets often and systematically monitors quality data on an annual basis. It was reported that annual and periodic evaluation reports are prepared and shared with the DPE's faculty general assembly. The faculty meet regularly to discuss and address issues concerning the effective delivery of instruction for maximum learning benefits to the students.

Every semester, students are asked to respond to survey questions in order to evaluate the content and objectives of each course, the organization and quality of teaching (methods, communication, student engagement), and the extent to which course objectives have been met. However, faculty also have the liberty to use additional questionnaires that are more appropriate for their courses. Faculty are in charge of analysing the questionnaire results. Examples of efforts to create a supportive and effective learning environment for students include:

- The differentiation of learning outcomes into knowledge, skills, and competences has helped build clear and descriptive indicators and makes it easier to categorize qualification levels.

- With judicious management of human resources and effective utilization of existing options, especially during the years in which there were no new faculty members, a great effort was made to improve the quality of learning outcomes every year.
- Class sizes were reduced by breaking up courses, attended by large numbers of students, into smaller ones and having the laboratory courses be taught in small groups.
- Postgraduate scholars were active across all phases of the practicum, in order to support students in achieving the learning outcomes of the practicum.
- The proposed bibliographies of the courses are updated and enriched, while there are attempts to include multi-method evaluative procedures.
- Logistical support (e.g., equipment) and the use of information and communication technologies have increased to an impressive extent. In this way, the teaching process has been enriched and is responsive to current and emerging demands and needs.

The programme promotes a synergy between teaching and research through a variety of courses and educational activities. More specifically, faculty members, including those associated with Research Laboratories like the laboratory of mathematics, the laboratory of sciences, the laboratory of history etc., have continuing collaborations with external university partners and provide teaching practicum opportunities across a range of local and international agencies.

Faculty members are invited by MODIP at regular intervals to provide information on activities related to their research. Formative assessment in teaching and learning, also is implemented. Additionally, quality control is applied to the infrastructure, and thus several upgrades were/are made.

The students' feedback to the EEAP indicated that they highly value the information management processes. They also rate highly the accessibility and availability of the support services in the Department as well as the communication with various professional and community organizations. Finally, they are very satisfied with the variety of the course topics offered and feel that the coursework prepares them well; it provides good connections between practice and research and contributes to their employability.

The EEAP members confirmed through their review of documents and interviews that the Department has in place the mechanisms needed for regular reviews of essential aspects of program delivery. The practices implemented by the DPE ensure the highest quality of a supportive and effective learning environment for students.

Panel Judgement

Principle 9: On-going Monitoring and Periodic Internal Review of Programs	
Fully compliant	√
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

The Department may want to solicit formative feedback from recent alumni who can engage in the examination of the curriculum.

Principle 10: Regular External Evaluation of Undergraduate Programmes

PROGRAMMES SHOULD REGULARLY UNDERGO EVALUATION BY COMMITTEES OF EXTERNAL EXPERTS SET BY HAHE, AIMING AT ACCREDITATION. 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 committee of independent experts. HAHE grants accreditation of programmes, with a specific term of validity, following to which revision is required. The accreditation of the quality of the programmes acts as a means of verification of the compliance of the programme with the template's requirements, and as a catalyst for improvement, while opening new perspectives towards the international standing of the awarded degrees.

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

The Department participated in an external evaluation that was completed in February 2014. The DPE has made significant efforts to address the [2014 Panel's recommendations](#), that are accessible online, in the DPE's website.

With respect to the curriculum, the DPE has responded to the recommendations in a number of areas, some of which were noted earlier in this report and include the:

- extended practicum experience, which is now supported by ERASMUS funding;
- provision of academic counsellors and mentors who guide and support students in the academic and student-teaching (practicum) aspects of the programme;
- development of new courses and seminars on:
 - STEAM and educational uses of Robotics;
 - the design, implementation, and evaluation of teaching practices in the area of technology;
 - special education topics on deafness and hearing loss;
 - psychology (school counselling in family-school interventions, psychoeducational evaluation of learning disabilities);
 - educational research and technography;
- engagement of students in research and scholarship as evidenced by data that approximately 50% of the undergraduates complete senior theses.

Similarly, the DPE has followed through on the recommendations on resources and collaborations with the local community partners and the Department of Early Childhood Education.

With respect to teaching and research, consistent with the 2014 Panel's recommendation, the DPE has increased its openness to the scholarly community and has numerous agreements and collaborations with institutions abroad. Although the number of DEP members has remained

relatively stable since the last evaluation report, the DPE’s scholarly productivity has steadily grown, as indicated by refereed publications, conference papers, and external funding outcomes. The DPE strives to provide support and incentives for scholarly productivity, however it appears that research efforts are constrained by the existing legal framework for higher education in Greece.

An important recommendation from the 2014 Panel was for the DPE to “to develop a strategic plan...for coordinating and harmonizing its strengths and expertise.” (p. 26). The current EEAP would like to reiterate this goal, as it would provide avenues for attracting highly qualified faculty around these strengths, thus expanding the DPE’s visibility and opportunities for funding and external collaborations.

Another recommendation from the previous panel was to “involve experts in writing research proposals...” In response, the faculty now receive alerts for new requests-for-proposals. Technical support during the proposal writing process is also available. However, it is not clear that the expertise provided extends to knowledge about the requirements and processes that are specific to different funding agencies. Having this kind of expertise, in house, would be advantageous to proposal writers.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Focus the Department’s efforts around strategically planned areas of expertise.
- Expand the proposal support services available to faculty.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

- English version of website
- Collaboration with a relatively high number of universities from various countries
- Strong relations with stakeholders
- Collaboration among staff
- Memorandum of understanding with experimental school (peiramatiko sxoleio)
- Extended Practicum (Dyevrymeni Practiki Askisi)
- Focus on connections between theory, research, and educational practice

II. Areas of Weakness

- Mentoring
- Small number of externally funded research projects
- Human resource management for coordinating and harmonizing the DPE's strengths and expertise

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

The EEAP recommends that the DPE:

- Articulate future goals and objectives including but not limited to a research policy.
- Develop courses that are delivered in both Greek and English so that the DPE can attract visiting professors from the international academic community and encourage foreign students to study at the DEC through the Erasmus program.
- Continue to use the stated incentives and monitor their effectiveness with respect to faculty productivity as reflected by external indicators (e.g., international refereed publications, externally funded projects) already collected by the Department.
- Develop a Teaching Award that is reflective of the multifaceted aspects of excellence in teaching and is based on multiple indicators of teaching effectiveness.
- Publish the schedule of classes earlier, in the middle of the previous semester, if possible, to facilitate student curricular and extra-curricular planning.
- Engage recent alumni in reviews of the curriculum, solicit their feedback and use it, as appropriate in curricular revisions.

Further, the EEAP recommends that the University take measures, as part of its human resources management policy, for better balancing the department's development and the staff's increasing workload.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: **1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10.**

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

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

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

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

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname

Signature

- 1. Prof. Emeritus Athanasios Gagatsis (Chair)**
University of Cyprus, Cyprus
- 2. Prof. Mary Ioannidou-Koutselini**
University of Cyprus, Cyprus
- 3. Prof. Leonidas Kyriakides**
University of Cyprus, Cyprus
- 4. Prof. Panayota Y. Mantzicopoulos-James**
Purdue University, United States of America