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HELLENIC REPUBLIC
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HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE
AND ACCREDITATION AGENCY

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN MACEDONIA (UoWM)



Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση
Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινωνικό Ταμείο

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



ΕΣΠΑ
2014-2020
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TABLE OF CONTENTS	pages
1. EXTERNAL EVALUATION COMMITTEE	4
2. INTRODUCTION	5
2.1 The External Evaluation Procedure	5
2.2 The Self-Evaluation Procedure	10
3. PROFILE OF THE INSTITUTION UNDER EVALUATION	11
3.1 Institutional Governance, Leadership & Strategy	11
3.1.1 Vision, mission and goals of the Institution	11
3.1.2 Organizational Development Strategy	12
3.1.3 Academic Development Strategy	13
3.1.4 Research Strategy	14
3.1.5 Financial Strategy	16
3.1.6 Building and Grounds Infrastructure	16
3.1.7 Environmental Strategy	17
3.1.8 Social Strategy	18
3.1.9 Internationalization Strategy	19
3.1.10 Student Welfare Strategy	20
3.2 Strategy for Study Programmes	21
3.2.1 Programmes of Undergraduate Studies (first cycle)	21
3.2.2 Programmes of Postgraduate Studies (second cycle)	24
3.2.3 Programmes of Doctoral Studies (third cycle)	25
3.3 Profile of The Institution under evaluation – Conclusions and recommendations	26
4. INTERNAL SYSTEM OF QUALITY ASSURANCE	28
4.1 Quality Assurance (QA) Policy and Strategy	28
4.2 Design, approval, monitoring and evaluation of study programmes and degrees awarded	29
4.3 Teaching and learning - Assessment by students	30

<i>4.4 Admission of students, progression and recognition of studies</i>	32
<i>4.5 Quality Assurance as regards the teaching staff</i>	33
<i>4.6 Learning resources and student support</i>	34
<i>4.7 Information Systems for Recording and Analysing Data and Indicators</i>	35
<i>4.8 Dissemination of information to stakeholders</i>	36
<i>4.9 Continuous monitoring and periodic review of the study programmes</i>	38
<i>4.10 Periodic external evaluation</i>	39
<i>4.11 Internal System of Quality Assurance - Conclusions and recommendations</i>	40
5. OPERATION OF THE CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE INSTITUTION	41
<i>5.1 Central Administration Services of the Institution</i>	41
<i>5.2 Operation of the Central Administration of the Institution – Conclusions and recommendations</i>	42
6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	43
<i>6.1 Final decision of the EEC</i>	45

1. EXTERNAL EVALUATION COMMITTEE

The Committee responsible for the External Evaluation of the University/Technological Education Institution named **University of Western Macedonia (UoWM)** comprised the following five (5) expert evaluators drawn from the Registry kept by the HQA in accordance with Law 3374/2005 and the Law 4009/2011:

1. Prof. Em. Constantine MEMOS (Chairman)
NATIONAL TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS
2. Prof. Thomas PANAGOPOULOS
UNIVERSITY OF ALGARVE
3. Prof. Viktor ROUDOMETOF
UNIVERSITY OF CYPRUS
4. Prof. Nikolaos GEORGANTZIS
UNIVERSITY OF READING
5. Prof. Georgios KAZAMIAS
UNIVERSITY OF CYPRUS

***N.B.** The length of text in each box is free. Questions included in each box are not exclusive nor should they always be answered separately; the Committee's reply to those questions is meant to provide a general outline of issues that need to be addressed.*

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 The External Evaluation Procedure

- Dates and brief account of the site visit
- Whom did the Committee meet?
- List of Reports, documents, other data examined by the EEC
- Groups of teaching and administrative staff and students interviewed
- Facilities visited by the EEC

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) visited the University of Western Macedonia (UoWM) between 29/2 and 5/3/2016. On 29/2 the EEC had a briefing meeting with Prof. I. Gerothanassis, Vice-President of ADIP. The site visit began on this day and continued until Saturday 5 March.

The Committee met the leadership of the Institution Rector, Deans, Chairs of the Departments, QAU Members. We also met Heads of Administrative Units, Members of Staff, undergraduate and postgraduate students, and external stakeholders. We note that a representative of DEI (the State Electricity Company, which has three endowed chairs in the University) did not come in the stakeholder meeting. A Skype conference was arranged on 4/3 with the DEI representative instead. On 2/3 the EEC travelled to Florina, where the UoWM has its other campus. Meetings with the same groups as above were replicated there. On Thursday 3/3 we held a debriefing meeting with representatives of the institution. The rest of the time was used for drafting the Report. All meetings took place promptly. The EEC did not split up into pairs at any point during the visit.

Details of the programme and meetings arranged follow.

Time-Table of the EEC Visit

University of Western Macedonia

28/2 – 5/3/2016

Time Purpose	Session	U o W M Representatives
Late afternoon	Arrival of EEC members in Thessaloniki. Check in at the Mediterranean Palace Hotel	
		Division of tasks; discussion of the self – evaluation process;

2. Monday, 29 February 2016
3. 8:00 - 10:00 Orientation meeting at the hotel premises (Mediterranean Palace Hotel)
4. EEC & Prof. Ioannis Gerothanassis (Vice President of the HQA Council)
5. Briefing of HQA mission, standards and guidelines of QA institutional evaluation, national framework of HEIs in Greece
6. 10:00 Departure for Kozani Town
7. 12:00 Arrival of EEC members in Kozani. Accommodation at “Ermionio” hotel
8. 12:30 - 12:45 EEC Meeting with the Rector
9. □ Prof. Antonios Tourlidakis, Rector
10. Welcome, acquaintances

13:00 - 14:00 EEC Meeting with the Rector members of the Senate and Chairmen of University Committees

- Prof. Antonios Tourlidakis, Rector
- Prof. Theodoros Theodoulidis, Dean, Faculty of Engineering
- Prof. Kariotoglou Petros, Dean, Faculty of Education
- Prof. Lemonidis Charalampos, Chairman of Primary Education Department

- ☐ Prof. Vamvakidou Ifigeneia, Chair of Early Childhood Education Department
- ☐ Prof. Bakouros Yiannis, Chairman of Mechanical Engineering Department
- ☐ Ass. Prof. Marnellos Georgios, Chairman of Environmental Engineering Department
- ☐ Prof. Dinas Konstantinos, Chairman of University Committee
- ☐ Prof. Tsakiridou Eleni, Chair of University Committee

Discuss key issues for evaluation from the Institution's perspective (arising from self-evaluation and from rector's and vice rectors' experience)

14:15 - 15:15 Lunch break EEC only

Reflect upon impressions of first meetings and complete information as necessary

15:30 - 16:45 EEC Meeting with self-evaluation team

- ☐ Prof. Antonios Tournlidakis, Rector
- ☐ Prof. Kariotoglou Petros, President of QAU
- ☐ Pnevmatikos Dimitrios, Member of QAU
- ☐ Anastasiadou Sofia, Member of QAU
- ☐ Godosi Zoe, Member of QAU
- ☐ Vezou Marina, Member of QAU
- ☐ Semoglou Kleoniki, Member of QAU
- ☐ Theodoulidis Theodoros, Member of QAU
- ☐ Stergiou Konstantinos, Member of QAU
- ☐ Indos Ilias, Member of QAU
- ☐ Efremidou Anastasia, Supporting Staff of QAU
- ☐ Karagiannis Panagiotis, Supporting Staff of QAU

Discuss to the Institution's structures, quality management and strategic management; national higher education and research policies; student issues. Understand self-evaluation process and extent of institutional involvement; how useful was the self-evaluation for the Institution (emerging issues, function in strategic planning processes)? Are self-evaluation data still up to date?

17:00 - 18:30 EEC Meeting with the Heads of the Administrative Services of the University

- ☐ Mr. Mpelias Thomas
- ☐ Mr. Konstantas Georgios
- ☐ Mr. Voutskidis Panagiotis
- ☐ Mrs. Liakou Maria
- ☐ Mrs. Vounatsou Varvara
- ☐ Mrs. Petaloti Christina
- ☐ Mrs. Ntzioka Aikaterini
- ☐ Mr. Vaitsakis Athanasios
- ☐ Mrs. Vavliara Despoina

Discuss role of Institutional strategic documents (development plans, etc.) in development of Institution; special issues arising from self-evaluation report and/or from talk with rector

18:45 Transfer of the EEC members to the hotel

Tuesday, 1 March 2016

09:00 - 10:00

Visit to faculties (part A):

- ☐ Department of Mechanical Engineering
- ☐ Department of Informatics and Telecommunications Engineering
- ☐ Prof. Theodoros Theodoulidis, Dean Faculty of Engineering
- ☐ Prof. Bakouros Yiannis, Chairman of Mechanical Engineering Department
- ☐ Ass. Prof. Stergiou Konstantinos, Chairman of Informatics & Telecommunications Engineering Department
- ☐ Department of Environmental Engineering
- ☐ Ass. Prof. Marnellos Georgios, Chairman of Environmental Engineering Department

Introduction to the faculty: structures, quality, management and strategic, management; discuss relationships of faculties with the central level; input in self-evaluation; role of quality control activities in faculty; recruitment of new academic staff

10:15-11:00

Visit to faculties (part B):

EEC Meeting with Academic Staff Representatives

- ☐ Lect. Panaras Georgios, Department of Mechanical Engineering

- ☐ Assist. Prof. Giagopoulos Dimitrios, Department of Mechanical Engineering
- ☐ Ass. Prof. Konstantinidis Efstathios, Department of Mechanical Engineering
- ☐ Lect. Sotiropoulou Rafaella – Eleni, Department of Mechanical Engineering
- ☐ Ass. Prof. Aggelidis Pantelis, Informatics & Telecommunications Engineering Department
- ☐ Lect. Sarigiannidis Panagiotis, Informatics & Telecommunications Engineering Department
- ☐ Lect. Bibi Stamatia, Informatics & Telecommunications Engineering Department
- ☐ Lect. Dasigenis Minas, Informatics & Telecommunications Engineering Department
- ☐ Assist. Professor Skodras Georgios, Environmental Engineering Department
- ☐ Prof. Sapidis Nickolaos, Mechanical Engineering Department

Discuss relationships of academic staff with the central level and students; staff development; motivation policies..

11:15 - 12:45

EEC Meeting with Internal Evaluation Groups Representatives

- ☐ Assist. Prof. Zigiridis Theodoros, Informatics & Telecommunications Engineering Department
- ☐ Ass. Prof. Louta Malamati, Informatics & Telecommunications Engineering Department
- ☐ Ass. Prof. Konstantinidis Efstathios, Department of Mechanical Engineering
- ☐ Prof. Sapidis Nickolaos, Mechanical Engineering Department
- ☐ Assist. Prof. Nenes Georgios, Mechanical Engineering Department
- ☐ Head of Secretariat – Mrs. Tzika Anna, Mechanical Engineering Department

Discuss to the Institution's structures, quality management and strategic management; national higher education and research policies; student issues. Understand self-evaluation process and extent of institutional involvement; how useful was the self-evaluation for the Institution (emerging issues, function in strategic planning processes)? Are self-evaluation data still up to date?

13:00 - 13:45

Visit to faculties (part C) EEC Meeting with students and PhD representatives

- ☐ Mr. Stegiou Ioannis, PhD Student
- ☐ Mr. Vafeiadis Kiriakos, PhD Student
- ☐ Mrs. Kouskoura Amalia, PhD Student
- ☐ Mr. Andronikidis Anastasios, PhD Student
- ☐ Mr. Salis Christos, PhD Student
- ☐ Georgiadou Aikaterini, PhD Student
- ☐ Kolonelos Panos, Student
- ☐ Koutsakis Georgios, Student
- ☐ Tzagarakis Dimitrios, Student
- ☐ Tsotalou Maria, Student
- ☐ Misiris Ioannis, Student
- ☐ Kouvari Aikaterini, Student
- ☐ Orfanidis Ioannis, Student
- ☐ Tagidou Eirini, Student
- ☐ Sarafidis Charalampos, Student
- ☐ Karipidis Paris- Alexandros, Student
- ☐ Tsintzira Aggeliki-Agathi, Student
- ☐ Mpsatsu Eleutheria, Student
- ☐ Litos Anastasios, Student

Students' views on experience [[e.g., teaching and learning, student input in quality control and (strategic) decision making in quality control and (strategic) decision making]

14:00 - 14:45

EEC Meeting with external partners EEC and industry, society and/or local authority representatives

- ☐ Mayor of Kozani Municipality, Mr. Ioannidis Eleftherios
- ☐ Governor of the Region of Western Macedonia, Mr. Karipidis Theodoros
- ☐ President of Technical Chamber of Greece/Department of Western Macedonia, Mr. Mavromatidis Dimitrios
- ☐ President of Chamber of Kozani, Mr. Kiriakidis Konstantinos
- ☐ Chairman of "Koventarios" Municipal Library, Mr. Demopoulos Panagiotis

Discuss relations of the Institution with external partners of the private and public sectors

15:00 - 16:00

Lunch break EEC only

Reflect upon impressions of meetings and complete information as necessary

16:00 - 18:00

Debriefing meeting. EEC only
Exchange impressions, review day

18:15 Transfer of the EEC members to the hotel

Wednesday, 2 March 2016

09:00 - 10:30 Transport to Florina - Arrival to Florina

10:30 - 11:30

EEC Visit to Faculty of Education
(part D)

- ☐ Department of Early Childhood Education
- ☐ Department of Primary Education
- ☐ Prof. Kariotoglou Petros, Dean
- ☐ Prof. Vamvakidou Ifigeneia, Chairman of Early Childhood Education Department
- ☐ Prof. Charalampos Lemonidis, Chairman of Primary Education Department

Introduction to the faculty: structures, quality management and strategic management; discuss relationships of faculties with the central level; input in self-evaluation; role of quality control activities in faculty; recruitment of new academic staff

11:45 – 12:15

Visit to faculties (part E)

EEC Meeting with academic staff representatives

- ☐ Ass. Prof. Spirtou Anna, Primary Education Department
- ☐ Ass. Prof. Griva Eleni, Primary Education Department
- ☐ Assist. Prof. Kasvikis Konstantinos, Primary Education Department
- ☐ Prof. Avgitidou Sofia, Early Childhood Education Department
- ☐ Assist. Prof. Papadopoulou Penelope, Early Childhood Education Department
- ☐ Assist. Prof. Fotopoulos Nikolaos, Early Childhood Education Department
- ☐ Mrs. Papageorgiou Efimia, Specialized Laboratory & Teaching Staff, Faculty of Education
- ☐ Assist. Prof. Godosi Zoe, Fine and Applied Arts Department.
- ☐ Assist. Prof. Kastritsis Ioannis, Fine and Applied Arts Department.

Discuss relationships of academic staff with the central level and students; staff development; motivation policies.

12:30 - 13:15

Visit the Faculty of Fine and Applied Arts (part F)

- ☐ Prof. Tourlidakis Antonios, Rector, Chairman of Fine and Applied Arts.
- ☐ Prof. Spiliopoulos Marios, Vice Chairman of Fine and Applied

Introduction to the faculty: structures, quality management and strategic management; discuss relationships of faculties with the central level; input in self-evaluation; role of quality control activities in faculty; recruitment of new academic staff

Arts Department

- ☐ Assist. Prof. Godosi Zoe, Fine and Applied Arts Department
- ☐ Assist. Prof. Ziogas Ioannis, Fine and Applied Arts Department
- ☐ Assist. Prof. Kontosfiris Charis, Fine and Applied Arts Department

13:30 - 14:30 Lunch break EEC only

Reflect upon impressions of meetings and complete information as necessary

14:45 - 15:30

EEC Meeting with students, MSc, PhD representatives

- ☐ Mrs. Kaiafa Ioanna, PhD Student
- ☐ Mrs. Solaki Andromachi, PhD Student
- ☐ Mr. Manou Leonidas, PhD Student
- ☐ Mr. Gitsas Stergios, MSc Student
- ☐ Mr. Kargakis Mathaios, MSc Student
- ☐ Mr. Ioannou Michalis, MSc Student
- ☐ Mr. Kapas Evangelos, Student
- ☐ Mrs. Monia Nikoleta, Student
- ☐ Mrs. Papadopoulou Christianna, Student

☐ Mrs. Saroglou Sofia, Student
Students' views on experience [e.g., teaching and learning, student input in quality control and (strategic) decision making in quality control and (strategic) decision making]

15:45 - 16:30 EEC Meeting with external partners

- ☐ Mayor of Florina Municipality, Mr. Voskopoulos Ioannis
- ☐ Vice Governor of the region of Western Macedonia, Mr. Biros Stefanos
- ☐ Director of Florina's Municipal Conservatory, Mr. Kitsos Vasileios

Discuss relations of the Institution with external partners of the private and public sectors

16:45 – 17:30

EEC Meeting with Internal Evaluation Groups Representatives

- ☐ Ass. Prof. Dimitriadou Aikaterini, Primary Education Department
- ☐ Ass. Prof. Griva Eleni, Primary Education Department
- ☐ Lect. Malandrakis Georgios, Primary Education Department
- ☐ Lect. Palaigeorgiou Georgios, Primary Education Department
- ☐ Ass. Prof. Alevriadou Anastasia, Early Childhood Education Department
- ☐ Ass. Prof. Anastasiadou Sofia, Early Childhood Education Department
- ☐ Assist. Prof. Godosi Zoe, Fine and Applied Arts Department
- ☐ Prof. Avgitidou Sofia, Early Childhood Education Department

18:00 Departure to Kozani City and Transfer of the EEC members to the hotel

Thursday, 3 March 2016 (EEC only)

09:00 - 14:00 Working on the draft of the External Evaluation Report (EER)

14:00 - 15:00 Lunch Break

15:30-16:30 Informal presentation of the Institution key findings by EEC

EEC and Rector, Evaluation team, , members of the Institution (invitations decided by the Rector),

16:30 - 18:00 Continue Working on the draft EER

18:15 Transfer of the EEC members to the hotel,

Friday 4 March 2016 (EEC only)

09:00 - 13:00 Working on the draft EER

13:00 - 14:30 Lunch Break

14:30 - 18:00 Continue working on the draft EER

18:00 Transfer of the EEC members to the hotel

Saturday, 5 March 2016 (EEC only)

11:00 Departure of the EEC from Kozani

Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (§2.1):

	Tick
Worthy of merit	X
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating: The meeting was competently designed and the University and Stakeholders were very motivated and helpful throughout. We were especially positively impressed by the people (students and staff) in Florina and the motivation of the staff in Kozani.

A comment on the programme: the hotel was on the main square of Kozani, in which on the Thursday celebrations took place (it was Tsiknopempti). This resulted in some members of the EEC having difficulty sleeping (revelry and high spirits continued under our windows until 3 in the morning).

2.2 The Self-Evaluation Procedure

Please comment on:

- Appropriateness of sources and documentation used
- Quality and completeness of evidence provided and reviewed
- The extent to which the objectives of the internal evaluation procedure have been met by the Institution
- Description and Analysis of the Self-Evaluation Procedure in the Institution
- Analysis of the positive elements and difficulties which arose during the self-evaluation procedure
- Whether the self-evaluation procedure was comprehensive and interactive

Sources and documentation used were high quality; the UoWM obviously thinks it is a worthwhile process and puts its limited human resources to very efficient use. Overall, preparation of material and prompt response to requests in the University was exemplary. The UoWM has two strategic plans drawn up by the previous (appointed) Governing Committee; none is an agreed text; therefore none was presented to us.

No disruption of the schedule of the visit (by students or otherwise) was encountered.

Staff motivation and willingness to receive comments was evident throughout the site visit; this is obviously positive and helps the Institution. Specific comments are to be found in the report.

Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (§2.2):

	Tick
Worthy of merit	X
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating:

This rating reflects the empirical observations made by the EEC during its visit as well as the other information provided by the UoWM.

3. PROFILE OF THE INSTITUTION UNDER EVALUATION

3.1 Institutional Governance, Leadership & Strategy

Please comment on:

3.1.1 Vision, mission and goals of the Institution

- What are the Institution's mission and goals

The mission statement and goals of UoWM as described in the Internal Evaluation Report are too broad and difficult to address realistically. The process, through which the mission and goals were established, was not stated. In section B.3.3 a wide range of goals and measures at the level of the Institution's academic units is presented, difficult to evaluate though since no prioritisation or time-lines are given. The EEC suggests that UoWM revises its published mission statement and goals so that they are more specific, achievable, and usable to assess the performance of UoWM in future internal or external evaluations. Additionally, the EEC suggests that the Institution sets up a process through which the strategic plan of the University is established so that it is widely adopted by the constituents (i.e. faculty, staff, students, community). Such a framework will form the foundation of the quality assurance (QA) internal system and should be conveyed to the Schools, which should align their individual mission statements and goals with those of the Institution.

- Priorities set by goals

No priorities are given to the individual goals pertaining to the seven main areas of academic activity, as given in section B.3.2. The same applies to the goals at the Department level, as mentioned above.

- How are the goals achieved

The goals are achieved by identifying and actively pursuing the issues in an ad hoc fashion. The lack of a guiding plan with roadmap is, however, apparent. This evidently hinders and delays the attainment of the strategic goals.

- Procedures established by the Institution to monitor the achievement of goals

There is no institution-wide written procedural manual which would document and describe well-defined procedures and metrics to be used to evaluate progress made towards achieving goals. In addition, UoWM needs to develop a set of specific target values for the metrics and contingency plans when the targets are not met. The EEC believes that such a document is needed for the Institution to set benchmarks and successfully assess progress.

- What is your assessment of the Institution's ability to improve

Although the UoWM is populated by highly skilled and motivated faculty and administration, circumstances were not normal at the time of this visit: the University has been continuously confronted with an extensive and inflexible regulatory framework which, in the course of the last few years, has led to major budget cuts combined with a drastic increase of student numbers and stagnation in the number of faculty members, inadequate by any standards anyway.

In addition to all the financial obstacles, the UoWM – still in its infancy as an independently governed Greek University – is also faced with a set of national laws and decrees affecting its operation, which are constantly changing and increasing in volume, irregular implementation and suspension of rules, as well as lack of responsiveness on the part of the Ministry to submitted documents. In such an environment it is difficult to implement creative and innovative initiatives that may lead to measurable improvements in quality.

These conditions have the potential to severely affect the quality of teaching and research programmes. Unless the national government commits, at the very minimum, to maintaining faculty, staff, and student intake at broadly acceptable numbers, the quality of the teaching and research programmes at UoWM may be in peril and the Institution's ability to improve limited. On the other hand, the economic crisis is apparently pushing UoWM towards exploiting ways to stretch its limited budget. This latter trend should increasingly place itself high in the priority list of an updated strategic plan that needs to be developed as a matter of urgency.

Considering the above constraints the EEC was satisfied with how the UoWM is functioning, hence its administrative team, faculty, and staff should be commended for their efforts. An area that requires improvement is the collaboration and synergies between the departments of the University in both educational and research terms.

The size of UoWM is limited for a contemporary University and the range of disciplines covered does not ensure a significant potential for intramural synergies that support attaining research and teaching excellence. Further forward, UoWM should be urged to develop synergies with the various educational and applied research & development entities outside the University as well as with those of direct relevance to the regional and national economy, e.g. the energy sector and environmental issues. In the same context, an effort towards closer collaboration between UoWM Schools should also be undertaken and any strategic advantages exploited fostering at the same time the individuality of the Institution's profile. Examples of initiatives along these lines could be built around the applied arts subject of studies, the affiliation of the Florina campus with other Balkan States, etc. The Kozani new campus should be pursued as a matter of priority in order to cope, at least partially, with the dispersion problem of many University installations. This development will enhance academic interaction and student life on a common campus.

<i>Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (§3.1.1):</i>	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	X
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating: UoWM high-level governing officials share a vision and associated goals as to where they want to lead the Institution. They articulate their vision and goals and are expending great efforts to achieve them. However, the Institution's official mission statement and goals are too broad and too numerous and must be refocused. Big issues such as size, local dispersion, diversity of content should be successfully confronted in the strategic planning. The Schools must align their mission and goals with those of the Institution and improve their collaboration considerably. Simplified and unified official mission statements and goals including benchmarking and time-lines are needed at all levels of the Institution.

3.1.2 Organizational Development Strategy

- Effectiveness of administrative officials
- Existence of effective operation regulations
- Specific goals and timetables
- Measures taken to reach goals
- Effectiveness of administrative officials

The EEC met with the UoWM administrative team on several occasions. The administrative team provided the EEC with information on the current condition of UoWM as well as their strategy and goals for the future. Strategy and goals for academic development were discussed at various levels, but clarifications and consistency are needed in the use of the terms mission, strategy, goals, and objectives.

The administrative team is committed to solving problems facing the Institution. It also appears to have good working relationships with the administrative staff, the faculty, and the Schools.

- Existence of effective operation regulations

As reported earlier, UoWM has submitted its organizational structure and operating procedures, as required by law 4009/2011, to the Ministry of Education. These have as yet not been approved. As a result, the University operates using a blend of procedures prescribed by the

1997 & 2011 laws. Under these circumstances, the administrative team appears to be carrying out the task of managing the Institution effectively.

- Specific goals and timetables

The University's strategic goals and timetable are described in section 3.1.1 Vision, mission and goals of the Institution. While the Rector is concerned with gaining approval for hiring faculty members as positions become vacant, the same effort should be extended to hiring technical support personnel. Furthermore, it is necessary to investigate and develop proposals on the issues of non-resident faculty and of the faculty quitting the University for other institution placements.

The Management of the University Finances Office should develop ideas on potential fund-raising as a matter of priority.

- Measures taken to reach goals

These are described in sections 3.1.3 "Academic Development Strategy" and 3.1.4 "Research Strategy".

Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (§3.1.2):

	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	X
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating:

The Rector and his administrative team are doing everything within their means to effectively govern the Institution. Actions of the national government are factors seriously inhibiting this effort. This team could be much more effective, if the legal framework under which it operates was clarified and kept stable for a period of several years by the national government. Leaving and non-resident teaching staff are issues that need to be addressed.

3.1.3 Academic Development Strategy

- Response of the Institution to Faculties and Departments
- Goals and timetables
- Measures taken to reach goals
- Response of the Institution to Faculties and Departments

The UoWM is organized into three Schools (Faculties) with each School offering undergraduate degrees equal in number to the Departments of the School, i.e. six in total. Seven postgraduate (Master's) degrees are offered by the School of Education (two in collaboration between its two Departments and one with other Universities), while one more is planned to start soon by the Engineering School. Most of them are charging fees to students who enrol in the programmes. A 25% of the revenue from the tuition fees is used to provide the University with some relief for its operational expenses. PhD degrees are offered throughout, since there are no required courses in these programs.

Undergraduate degrees consist of the equivalent of 8 semesters (10 in the School of Engineering and in the School of Fine Arts), depending on the discipline. Three Endowed Chairs are currently running in the University and EEC believes that they bring value in UoWM and that there are prospects in further exploiting this practice.

- Goals and timetables

Development goals should be clearly established and spelled out and then timetables for reaching these goals should be developed. Issues of viability should be taken in consideration prior to setting up goals.

The Departments should periodically review the correct integration of the ECTS units and learning outcomes in their curricula. They should also re-examine their attitude toward introducing some prerequisites in student academic advancement.

Interdepartmental interaction should be developed further, across Schools as well as within them. Also extra-mural interaction should be sought after, as a means of magnification of the Institution, in addition to the other benefits of outward-looking attitude of UoWM that should be strengthened. Possible future development goals that could be considered by the University include the establishment of a Balkan Languages Centre, educational and research collaboration with the local TEI, etc.

Possible goals could be disrupted by increasing influx of students that is dictated externally. That could become a major challenge for the University. Ways to counteract its negative impact upon the quality of studies should be sought, although the EEC recognizes the difficulties involved. This increase should not lead to a reduction in the use of the “laboratory” as a teaching component. This is something to be avoided at all costs.

- Measures taken to reach goals

Some of the above initiatives have made their way through an initial stage of deliberations at various levels of faculty and administrative governance at UoWM. These should be formalized and set forth in writing. However, doing so may further require a considerable amount of time.

<i>Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (§3.1.3):</i>	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	X
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating: UoWM has worthy academic development goals. Most of them are in their initial phases of development. Despite existing serious limiting external factors, the Institution is forward-looking in refining its academic offerings, e.g. by establishing Endowed Chairs. A serious effort is required in terms of developing ties with other institutions and stakeholders in the area.

3.1.4 Research Strategy

- Key points in research strategy
- Research strategy objectives and timetables for achieving them
- Laboratory research support network
- Research excellence network
- Existence of research assistance mechanisms (for preparing proposals, capitalising on patents and innovations, finding partners for research programmes, etc.)
- Key points in research strategy

UoWM administration’s research strategy for the future is to enhance quality and excellence in research activity. This could be supported by establishing partnerships with national and international institutions, and providing administrative support for submitting proposals and operating grants. The Institution’s research output can be further fostered through interdepartmental initiatives developing research links between UoWM’s departments.

Nevertheless, the teaching load across the University is high and in some instances there is not enough time for faculty to devote to their research. This issue should be faced. Also, in the School of Education the research interests of some faculty members are not directly aligned with their educational task, thus not providing the expected added value to the students.

The EEC recommends that UoWM's research strategy be internally agreed and a key person or committee should be responsible for implementing the University's research policy including postgraduate courses. In the latter case some degree of homogenisation in terms of entrance criteria and other quality requirements should be targeted. The research strategy plan should include measures to upfront the niches that could be filled by UoWM, e.g. the applied arts, energy & environment.

A limited number of partnerships with other entities were noted, especially with institutions for the purpose of running joint postgraduate programmes. The issue of partnerships should be further exploited in the framework of outward-looking policy of the University, as a matter of urgency. Such a policy should include societal outreach as a high priority (see §3.1.8).

The relevant university research office (ELKE) advances approved grants to the responsible faculty member so that the research project can be carried out in accordance with the research timetable. Also, ELKE provides a limited number of grants to PhD students and post-docs that are performing research with UoWM.

- Research strategy objectives and timetables for achieving them

The initiatives mentioned above in §3.1.4 need to be implemented in a manner that takes into account the existing regulatory framework. Thus effectiveness relies heavily on this framework as well. Some co-ordination of the research activities is required though, as noted above in §3.1.4. Current and future research needs at the national or regional level should be examined and steps taken if necessary (e.g. in the sector of energy, or in the applied arts). Support for junior faculty to develop their research is also an issue deserving consideration when financial conditions improve.

- Laboratory research support network

The University has not developed initiatives along those lines, due to its young age and the more serious problems, originated externally, that it strives to overcome.

- Research excellence network

The previous comment applies here also. However, innovation needs to be promoted considerably and the necessary outward-looking strategy should encompass a dedicated line of relevant action.

- Existence of research assistance mechanisms (for preparing proposals, capitalising on patents and innovations, finding partners for research programmes, etc.)

An early form of such a mechanism exists but there is no specific office that is in charge of providing assistance for preparing proposals, capitalising on patents and innovations, finding partners for research programmes, etc. The financial support of the PhD students (through research funds) should be addressed with a view ultimately to covering the whole population of such students. Please see also general comment in previous two bullets.

Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (§3.1.4):

	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	X
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating:

UoWM's administration is willing to ensure that the Institution's research productivity increases and the research remains relevant. Many critical strategic components are missing

though and the research culture is based on individual initiative and not on a synergetic well-coordinated effort. Concerted action is required to address various niches that this University could apparently fill.

3.1.5 Financial Strategy

- General financial strategy and management of national and international funds
- Regular budget management strategy
- Public investment management strategy
- Organisation and strategy of the Special Account for Research Funds (SARF)
- Organisation and strategy of the University Property Development and Management Company
- Existence of a Quality System for Financial Management (e.g. ISO), computerisation management and Budget monitoring (Regular Budget, Public Investments Programme, SARF Budget, etc.)

The UoWM is a small and flexible institution and this is also reflected on the way in which it manages its funds. Among the positive points, it is worth mentioning the involvement of all authorities and administrative services and, especially, the degree of awareness by nearly everybody of the overall financial situation and the specific measures taken in order to fully benefit from the funding possibilities available, coping at the same time with the restrictions. Thus, the management of national and international funds is satisfactory. However, like in other areas evaluated, there is no strategic approach designed as a plan of steps and measures aimed at a set of longer-term goals and/or a certain vision beyond coping in the best way with the current situation. The internal evaluation report provides a very detailed account of budget broken down by codes, but it does not mention any measures towards a Quality System for Financial Management (e.g. ISO), computerisation management and Budget monitoring. Finally, there is no particular strategy or specific division/company yet, dealing with the University Property Development and Management, although the steps are mentioned towards the establishment of such a strategy in the near future.

To summarise, all activities related to a regular budget management strategy, including public investment management strategy and the organisation of the Special Account for Research Funds (SARF [ELKE]), are satisfactory, but a more proactive attitude will be necessary to overcome the budgetary limitations in a more creative and sustainable manner.

<i>Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (§3.1.5):</i>		Tick
Worthy of merit		
Positive evaluation		X
Partially positive evaluation		
Negative evaluation		

Justify your rating: Although coping fine with the crisis and budget is well administered by the governance bodies and managed by the administrative members of staff, some larger degree of pro-activeness seems to be necessary to overcome the obvious budgetary problems.

3.1.6 Building and Grounds Infrastructure Strategy

- Strategy key points

- Objectives and timetables
- Measures taken to reach goals
- Deviations from model 1 campus/HEI

Buildings and ground infrastructure is currently a major limiting factor for many of the actions and steps necessary towards a consolidated institution according to the internationally established standards. The current situation severely deviates from the single-campus desideratum, making it difficult for possible synergies among departments and especially across Schools of the University to be maximized. Needless to mention, the current building situation of the Engineering School does not allow for the necessary measures to be taken towards persons with special needs, nor does it create the ground for a homogeneously endowed and ideally planned classroom environment. However, all the members of staff and students are aware of the problem and make every effort possible to deal with this limitation. Furthermore, efforts have been made which seem to have given positive results regarding the construction of a new campus in Kozani; this will give an adequate solution to many of the aforementioned problems, albeit without managing to bring closer the Engineering and the Education Schools of the University. In turn, this signals a persistent geographical division of the two constituent disciplines (located in two different cities, at a driving distance of approximately one hour from each other). The Kozani campus project requires specific timetables and continuous lobbying to achieve the goal within a reasonable period.

<i>Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (§3.1.6):</i>	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	X
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating: Building dispersion is problematic but a great deal of effort is made towards finding a solution, which seems to bring results leading to the eventual construction of a new campus in Kozani.

3.1.7 Environmental Strategy

- Recycling strategy and measures taken to reach goals
- Hazardous waste management and measures taken to reach goals
- Urban waste management and measures taken to reach goals
- Green energy strategy and measures taken to reach goals

According to the internal evaluation report, only some of the labs of the Engineering School entail risks due to dangerous wastes. While a mention is made to observing the necessary protocols for the management of such waste, there are no details or examples given along this direction. The EEC noted also that there is no discernible disposal of liquid waste and hazardous materials at the Department of Fine and Applied Arts.

The most proactive policy regarding the environmental policy of the University entails recycling of paper, plastic, electric appliances and batteries. Other positive aspects, like normal waste collection and, especially, environmentally friendly tele-heating follow policies originating from the surrounding administrative and technological environment, which is specific to the geographical area of UoWM. A positive mention should be made with respect to the university's compliance with the existing anti-smoking legislation.

Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (§3.1.7):	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	X
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating: Recycling and risky waste management is mentioned. A more detailed account of planned strategies and particularities would have been welcome.

3.1.8 Social Strategy

- Exploitation and dissemination of the Institution's Research Activities for the benefit of society and economy
- Promotion of interaction between the Institution and the Labour Market
- Sustained relationships with key local and regional bodies
- Contribution to the cultural development of society, the city and the region
- Reciprocal and long-lasting relationship with the alumni community

As it would have been expected due to its young age, the Kozani-part of UoWM has not established long term relationships with many regional bodies and companies. Nevertheless, an effort is being made to interact with the local society and stakeholders to the extent that this is feasible, especially maintaining several levels of collaboration with ΔΕΗ (State Electricity Company) and the regional sector of the Technical Chamber of Greece (Τεχνικό Επιμελητήριο). This appears to correspond to strategies at an individual department, lab and researcher level. There is a subunit of a university unit (DASTA) that is in charge of supporting innovation and entrepreneurship. That includes measures of dissemination towards the local society and economy.

DEH during the skype meeting showed willingness to support a number of scholarships, for example for refugees that may want to continue their post-graduate studies in UoWM in the areas that are related to energy and environment. Similar funders can be found in local authorities, Greek society and internationally, which may wish to help refugees to complete their studies and simultaneously to create a research centre of excellence in a remote region of the country that few Greeks are in disposition to stay. In this way, the problem of small size University located in a low population density region can become an opportunity to attract the best of the refugees, which by their turn will be grateful for helping them to complete their advanced research in Macedonia and will become the future ambassadors of the Greek culture, and also will create opportunities for the local community of Macedonia to establish new business during the reconstruction of their country.

Overall, the University receives enthusiastic approval and a very positive attitude on behalf of the local public and private stakeholders. However, while several of the stakeholders interviewed mentioned some benefits from UoWM's graduates for the labour market, no systematic information seems to be available or collected regarding the impact of the University on the local or the broader labour market. For similar reasons to those mentioned above, no functioning alumni community exist. Such a community would be a major step necessary towards establishing a successful and impactful labour market-oriented strategy.

<i>Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (§3.1.8):</i>	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	X
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating: The institution's short life has not allowed for long-term relationships, while the system DASTA is a promising unit that has to be supported.

3.1.9 Internationalization Strategy

- Integration of the international dimension in the curricula
- Integration of the international dimension in research
- Integration of the intercultural dimension within the campus
- Participation in international HEI networks
- Collaboration with HEIs in other countries (with a specific collaboration agreement) - measures taken to reach goals

The UoWM interacts with the international community in various ways. A large number of its faculty members have studied abroad and have numerous publications and projects in collaboration with researchers and research centres from all over the world. However, there are also several other cases of faculty members who are less integrated into the international community, leading to a mixed record regarding internationalization at an institutional level. In fact, no systematic centrally undertaken strategy seems to have been adopted in order to participate in international institutional networks, except for various and rather systematic actions facilitating collaborations with academic institutions in Albania and FYROM. Furthermore, whereas a satisfactory and systematic effort is made regarding students' participation in exchange programs like ERASMUS, a very small number of incoming students seems to be attracted from abroad. Also, several obstacles seem to arise for students who decide to go to other countries in the framework of an ERASMUS exchange. Indicatively, some students described the difficulties associated with a temporary relocation to another country leaving behind one's long term residence and the lack of academic incentives due to insufficient one-to-one correspondence of the courses at the host university with the formative contents and standards of the university of origin.

There are plans to develop further cooperation in teacher training with the Greek Community of Toronto and plans for a double degree programme with Cranfield University in the UK.

The EEC recommends further measures, such as strengthening the presence of Applied Arts as well as developing collaborative relationships across the border areas and internationally.

<i>Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (§3.1.9):</i>	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	X
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating: Effort is made to collaborate with academic institutions across the borders with Albania and FYROM and the ERASMUS program is efficiently managed, but some further planning is required at an institutional level.

3.1.10 Student Welfare Strategy

- Student hostel operation and development strategy
- Student refectory development strategy
- Scholarships and prizes strategy
- Sports facilities operation and development strategy
- Cultural activities strategy
- Strategy for people with special needs

The lack of a unified campus compromises the feasibility and efficacy of the student welfare strategy. Whereas a significant part of the budget is dedicated to student welfare, including free food to a substantial number of students (well above standard practices in the rest of the world), the latter complain about the quality of food available in the refectory. The UoWM uses a limited number of rooms to house students in a building provided by the local municipality. It does not have its own dormitories at the moment and no formal plan exists yet to deal with this problem in the new campus in the future.

It is true that the UoWM has a gymnasium in the Florina campus and some mention was made of a basketball team, too. However, overall, sports and related activities do not appear to be a university-wide priority. Finally, the low number of students has contributed to a very low number of cases of students with special needs being allocated by the Ministry. The UoWM does not have a strategy or infrastructure for people with special needs. As a result, the University is dealing with such cases on a case by case basis, but no university-wide policy is designed “ex ante” to support persons with special needs.

<i>Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (§3.1.10):</i>	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	X
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating:

While effort is made and resources are allocated to support students in various aspects of their lives, like free food to a large number of them, student housing and accessibility for people with special needs need urgently more attention.

3.2 Strategy for Study Programmes

3.2.1 Programmes of Undergraduate Studies (first cycle)

Please comment on:

- the main strengths and weaknesses of the Programmes
- the basic obligations of students, e.g. attendance of lectures, course requirements, etc.
- the way the Central Administration of the Institution deals with any remarks and recommendations that the external experts pointed out in the External Evaluation of Academic Units

Main strengths of the Programmes

A) Engineering departments (Kozani)

- The Curricula of the engineering faculties are quite reasonably (and rather conventionally) designed. A strong emphasis is placed on student progression, on almost any circumstances (with attendance or without, with partial attendance etc) and on acquisition of basic and fundamental knowledge and skills, to the limits of staffing levels. The issue of staffing came up again and again in the engineering faculties, one of which presently has no staff members at all. The faculty's dedication goes a long way towards covering the deficiencies of the state provision; this is obviously unfair on the condition of work of the staff.
- Initiation of curricular evaluation and some updating should be looked at carefully, to streamline course offerings; also, a degree of creative thinking should be encouraged (not least by MODIP members in the University). This will go a long way towards identifying niche markets appropriate to all departments, with limited duplication. The Institution's internal evaluation report and the meetings with schools and departments shows strong intentions to continue critical evaluations of the programmes of study, but this is hampered by understaffing. The ideal of a similar process taking place on an annual basis may not be a viable option; periodic recurrence (e.g. every other year) may be more viable.
- On paper, theoretical mastery as well as adequate hands-on training (laboratory work) is appreciated by students providing them with a strong basis for versatility in their careers. The Committee has no evidence to dispute the facts provided by the Institution.
- Student evaluations are collected from all courses, but the response rates are disappointing (not least to the members of staff itself).
- In both mechanical and environmental engineering there is strong social (incl. local) relevance of programmes, by virtue of the DEI, the State Electricity Company as the main energy producer in Greece and the environmental impact this causes to the region. This is obviously a niche market that would integrate the University and the local society; further steps should be encouraged.
- Some evidence of job placement was noticed.

B) Education and Fine Arts departments

- This group has a much longer history in HE (the teacher training school, we were told was founded in 1941) and this difference shows. Not only are they much better staffed (despite retirements and other losses), but they seem to have a clearer idea as to the model they wish to pursue.
- The Curriculum was redesigned recently (2014-5), on the principles outlined above (student progression etc). Again, some creative thinking, ideally integrating the two groups (Kindergarten and Primary School) as well as the Fine Arts could create a unique combination in academic programme offerings. Some thinking of the means and ways to further integrate (admittedly: theoretically disparate) teaching in Kozani and Florina could further this end (as well as the UoWM *esprit de corps*)
- Student evaluations are, again, collected but the response rate is disappointing.
- Practical training is undertaken as a compulsory part of undergraduate study (primary and kindergarten teachers). Similar practical sections are part of the fine arts curriculum.

The cyclical training (κύκλος) of the fine arts department is a commendable feature of its study (much more practical) programme.

Main weaknesses of the Programmes

- (i) Large and irregularly fluctuating number of registered students. However, the University regularly becomes an examination centre, rather than a centre of organized university learning.
- (ii) Large student to faculty ratio (32.5 to 1). Staffing levels are better in the education and fine arts school. Technical staff is few and far between (in part their absence is covered by temporary student assistants).
- (iii) Extremely small number of teaching support staff for the number of students and the number of courses with laboratories. This problem is acute in the engineering departments, where laboratory work is central to teaching.
- (iv) The number of administrative staff for the number of students and academic staff is relatively small, but highly dedicated. Some staff appears highly skilled in their allotted tasks.
- (v) Shortage of funds hampers and dampens both ideas and actual expansion in teaching and research.
- (vi) Laboratories (when they are part of teaching requirements) appear well equipped; on the day of the site visit they were not at all well attended. Of course, student working hours are not always regular.
- (vii) Course prerequisites are an essential part of study. The correct mix is a desired feature of any study programme. This mix should be actively sought, using a variety of ways, not just student ease.
- (viii) Poor attendance by students in lecture courses is a problem. Solutions necessarily point towards monitoring attendance (even linking student attendance to the right to take part or not in final or mid-term examinations). A general rationalization of procedures could possibly help.
- (ix) Average time to degree exceeds required time by nearly 2 years in the School of Engineering. This is a general feature of university study in Greece. A greater rationalization of procedures could possibly help, particularly if the rules were not tampered with by the State.
- (x) Alumni outreach programmes or an alumni office is lacking. There is therefore a lack of tracking initiatives of the majority of graduates. Whatever information exists is collected on an ad hoc basis. This is unsystematic. An alumni office would help enormously.
- Basic obligations of students
 - (i) Registration is online, but subsequent course completion is erratic. The absence of prerequisites further complicates this problem.
 - (ii) While the ECTS system has been implemented, a more substantial mapping of the number of credits of each course to the actual required student effort would be advisable. Lack of employment opportunities in most cases leads to temporary work, often not linked to studies.
- Central and External Evaluation of Academic Units

It was observed that all Schools have reviewed their External Evaluations and addressed and implemented many recommendations included in these reports. Staffing problems further compound the issue, as does the degree of often stifling control of the central authority over the number of incoming students and their academic orientation. This may originate in the State's desire to somehow regulate the availability of certain graduate specialisations in the job market; rather than this, it is used for clientelistic political ends. This university (and all universities) should be allowed to regulate numbers themselves, on the basis of how many students they can realistically train with the staff and the facilities available. There is an excessive role of formal State input; extreme and sudden budgetary cuts and lack of flexibility in resolving resource limitations needlessly complicate virtually all issues.

The EEC has found that in most cases, the central administration works well, is motivated and facilitates and supports the implementation of the recommendations presented in the External Evaluation reports of the Departments. The problem therein is that imagination and exercise of initiative are sometimes looked down upon.

General Comments and Suggestions for Improvement:

The University should consider developing orientation initiatives (particularly first year, when one meeting may not be enough) and careful tracking of student attendance and progress and, if possible, personal tutoring. Student numbers allow this, when in other, larger universities that is clearly impossible. The aim should be to identify student weaknesses and eliminate barriers for their progression. It may be possible to use senior / postgraduate students as advisors and mentors of younger students. The search and adoption of best practices from other institutions should continue. After serious and in depth discussion in Departments, these could be introduced in the UoWM.

The State and the University must come to an agreement on the number of incoming students over a number of years (e.g. a 4-year cycle), based on the funding the university receives from the State. The number of incoming students should remain stable for reasonably long periods of time, so as to allow the University to optimally plan its academic activities; among these should be to ensure quality teaching, minimize alienation of students, decrease the number of stagnant students, and enable faculty to meet (even) higher academic standards.

The State should revise radically existing procedures, indeed the whole framework of Higher Education, with a view to handing back this space to the universities and stakeholder community. The tyranny of FEK (Φύλλο Εφημερίδος Κυβερνήσεως) that is required for the legal operation of most activities should be revised downwards. This would allow universities to look for alternative sources of revenue streams. In this the UoWM is a pioneer, having secured the first faculty chairs paid for by DEI (the State Electricity Company), a great help in the circumstances.

The University could increase efforts to secure funding (even limited) from private companies. Even small sums of a few hundred Euros per month per student would go a long way to sustaining undergraduate students and the money would go back to the community (in the form of rents and subsistence). This public-private partnership could create a revenue stream dedicated to undergraduates' support that could be a source of goodwill for the host cities.

The climate between students and staff is clearly good, as far as the EEC has observed. Such a positive climate (despite the EEC's own worries before the site visit), has translated in no objections whatsoever being voiced during the visit by the students. Student views of staff were uniformly positive, as far as we observed.

The EEC did not find a strong entrepreneurship and innovation dimension in the undergraduate programmes. In one group of engineering students we talked to, state employment is only a minor strand in their future plans. In another group, state employment does not figure so prominently as in the past. Nonetheless, the Central Administration should develop academic offerings in entrepreneurship that would enhance the existing academic programme and support faculty (and students / alumni) that are willing to develop initiatives down this path. The open classes offered by some staff as an outreach activity point the way in this direction.

Even if the response rates are often disappointing, teaching course evaluations are generally good and cover a large number of courses in each semester. While formal complaints appear few and far- between, the EEC would like to recommend that the University develop a teaching enhancement programme and a support office (e.g. Teaching and Learning Centre) to provide guidance to staff (mostly to new staff, but not solely for them) to develop better teaching skills.

The EEC believes there is diversity in student performance and learning outcomes and achievements. This is both natural and expected. In the case of UoWM, the low admission grades and the necessary compensatory measures (e.g. in mathematics) are not addressed in a systematic or organised way. The EEC believes that emphasis should be given to the less well performing students, including potential dropouts. Personal pastoral care is probably a solution to this. More emphasis is also needed to understand and monitor the range of achievements by all graduates and work backwards toward the current cohorts.

Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (§3.2.1):

	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	X
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating:

Undergraduate teaching in the UoWM suffers seriously from the overall effects of the problems in Greek higher education: cuts in funding and staffing levels, and rising student numbers are nation-wide constraints, which need nation-wide answers. The State should consider changing the framework of higher education, away from the present, towards a freer framework, appropriate for the 21st century. This would give the necessary space to institutions, incl. the UoWM.

3.2.2 Programmes of Postgraduate Studies (second cycle)

Please comment on:

- **The main strengths and weaknesses of the Programmes**

UoWM currently offers seven postgraduate programmes that lead to a Master's degree, all in the Education School. Some of these (2) are in cooperation with the other Department in the School of Education and one is in cooperation with staff from other universities (with or without an official capacity). In the academic year 2014-15 there were 396 students. Most of the programmes are self-funded, but two follow the original free (or quasi-free) configuration, with no tuition fees.

The EEC view is that the UoWM post-graduate offerings cover a wide spectrum of subject areas; some of these would not normally be found in a department of education (notably Creative Writing and Cultural Studies). The EEC was told that Creative Writing is intended to provide training to assist individuals who wish to teach special needs individuals; but that argument does not seem entirely convincing.

Requirements, success of recruiting, and selection of students varies by programme. The overall demand for post-graduate degrees in Greece is such, that all such initiatives are presently over-subscribed, indeed a large percentage of applicants fail to secure a place. The EEC observes that some (perhaps most) of this teaching is in excess of the normal teaching load; furthermore, some teaching is done on weekends. While this model is based on customer base availability, it may detract from research time.

This variety of loads and activities would be better coordinated by a Senate-level appointed committee. This Committee would monitor and enforce common standards, develop an overall strategic and operational plan, promote the internationalization of postgraduate education, and even develop a stable revenue stream to support the programmes. Moreover, the creation of a formal graduate advising structure that coordinates schools and departments will lead to further rationalization of postgraduate education at the UoWM. Such a committee could be composed perhaps of some of the programme co-ordinators (in lieu or as a precursor to a School of Graduate Studies, for which the UoWM may not yet be large enough). When postgraduate provision extends to the Engineering Departments, this proposed structure would ensure dissemination of knowledge e.g. concerning the design of new programmes and a better control of overall quality assurance.

The EEC had an opportunity to speak to several postgraduate students during the site visit; those interviewed seem satisfied with their experience. Apparently not all the postgraduate students have the same opportunities and comparable quality of facilities, but this is natural. Also, only a fraction of the postgraduate students have the opportunity to work on research or related areas. Quality assurance in the postgraduate programme is weak and in some cases non-existent.

A major problem for the sustainability of the current postgraduate programmes is funding. UoWM appears to have the intention to offer postgraduate programmes or parts therein in English or indeed Slavic languages. But this plan is still at the drawing board. Such a move would help internationalize the programmes. Revenue from the tuition paid should allocate a substantial part to subsidizing underfunded undergraduate programmes and support students in need of financial support.

- **The basic obligations of students, e.g. attendance of lectures, course requirements, etc.**

The postgraduate programmes require enrolled students to take courses and to some extent conduct research-oriented projects and final theses. The ECTS requirements differ by programme. The sample of students interviewed by the EEC has indicated a high interest in the programmes enrolled.

- **the way the Central Administration of the Institution deals with any remarks and recommendations that the external experts pointed out in the External Evaluation of Academic Units**

The external review of the Departments and their postgraduate programmes is forwarded to the Schools by the Institution's administration; Schools and Departments address the issues raised by the review and make the suggested improvements. Improvements to postgraduate programmes are discussed by the faculty and may be adopted and incorporated during the regular programme review periods. Given the limited staffing of the Institution, these reviews occur when required.

Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (§ 3.2.2):

	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	X
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating: There are a large number of post-graduate programmes. These have grown in a haphazard and uncoordinated fashion. There is a limit to how many programmes could or should be developed. The University should carefully review these programmes and prioritize those that are clearly aligned with the subject matters of the departments. The above obviously refer to those programmes that are run from the Florina campus.

3.2.3 Programmes of Doctoral Studies (third cycle)

Please comment on:

- the main strengths and weaknesses of the Programmes
- the basic obligations of students, e.g. attendance of lectures, course requirements, etc.
- the way the Central Administration of the Institution deals with any remarks and recommendations that the external experts pointed out in the External Evaluation of Academic Units

All departments that have faculty members above the rank of lecturer are allowed to admit PhD students. However, the lack of centrally-structured PhD programmes with specific course requirements translates to a deficiency that is partly covered by each department's own regulations and procedures. PhD students are a desired instrument to academic staff because their research contribution is necessary and potentially invaluable. The 60 PhD candidates of the Department of Education are a testimony to this issue; there are fewer PhD candidates in the engineering departments. All seem enthusiastic with their research and supervision.

Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (§3.2.3):

	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	X
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating: The EEC suggests a more structured formation system toward a “course-based” PhD program. This should help PhD students and offer them solid foundation for basic and specialization elements in their pre-dissertation period. However, the EEC recognises the staff limitations for the implementation of this step. Among the UoWM’s Departments, the Department of Education appears to have the resources to at least initiate such a turn.

3.3 Profile of the Institution under evaluation - Conclusions and recommendations

Please complete the following sections regarding the overall **profile of the Institution under evaluation**:

- *Underline specific positive points:*

1. Academic and Administrative Staff as well as Students are positively motivated. This is an obvious advantage for the working of the UoWM and augurs well for the future.
2. Both students and staff recognise (in different ways) advantages and weaknesses and show a willingness to change and adapt using the advantages for getting better and the weaknesses as a guide for change.
3. The small size of the UoWM encourages a family feel; this is a very positive point and is conducive to better teaching (and research). Good human relations at the workplace are a positive advantage.
4. The co-existence of Schools with seemingly disparate subjects under the same administration is a seldom opportunity for synergies and innovative output.

- *Underline specific negative points:*

1. Lack of a clear strategy was noted and remarked in the meetings we had. A set of specific, measurable goals and timeline to achieve them must be formulated as a matter of priority.
2. Though the size of the institution has been mentioned in the advantages, small size can be restrictive in some ways. This can be countered with synergies with other institutions.
3. The lack of the equivalent of a graduate school (alternatively a Senate-level appointed committee) to co-ordinate the further development of postgraduate studies in the UoWM has also been noted. Though the institution is still rather small, some equivalent structure to a Graduate School will to an extent counter the haphazard and un-organized way in which postgraduate studies have developed to date. Transfer of knowledge between Departments as regards post-graduate studies will also be facilitated, despite the variance of subjects.
4. Similarly, a clear strategy, policy and uniform criteria for both under- and post-graduate teaching (see above), should be complemented by similar measure for the management of research and staff development.

- *Make your suggestions for further development of the positive points:*

1. Staff development is a notable exception in the institution strategy. Initiatives for staff development should be carefully thought and discussed within Departments and Schools. Mentoring of early-career staff could be considered and developed.
2. Particular niche areas of growth should be identified and creatively developed. This would strengthen the UoWM’s teaching and research profile and lessen the effects of threats it has faced in the recent past. These niche areas of growth, in time will have a positive effect on the institution’s esprit de corps.

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 3. Some creative thinking and ‘thinking outside the box’ has been positively remarked; both should be encouraged further, until they become part of the institutional ethos. 4. The funding situation is grim; do we seriously believe this will become better, in the next 3-5 years? If not, different avenues for generating additional revenue streams should be explored. The externally funded chairs are a way forward the UoWM has already used; ways to expand this provision should be explored and developed. 5. Identify niche areas of research and education and find external funding to support their development. This initiative may be combined with supporting refugees as noted in §3.1.8. 6. Cross-School synergies should be explored based on a comprehensive strategic plan of internal co-operation.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Make your suggestions on needed steps for improvement:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A clearer development Strategy should be created, with implementation timetable; this should be monitored and periodically revised. 2. The new campus in Kozani is of crucial importance; this issue should be followed through carefully. The same should be the case with other building projects planned. 3. An alumni office should be created and staffed, possibly by university alumni members. This should develop connections with former students and transform them into an asset for the UoWM. 4. The issue of the Institution size should be addressed and possible solutions considered and explored. 5. Develop research strategy and build partnerships with external stakeholders; the present network of stakeholders is a good base; this could be developed, perhaps using the UoWM as a focal point (which the present stakeholders may expect). This could strengthen both the university and perhaps the stakeholders themselves. 6. Focus on post-graduate programmes: formulate post-graduate studies committee / graduate School to regulate and organise the offering and operation of postgraduate studies. Specific postgraduate studies should be offered within discipline boundaries. Interdisciplinary post-graduate programmes should be pursued through interdepartmental programmes or jointly with other universities.

4. INTERNAL SYSTEM OF QUALITY ASSURANCE

4.1 Quality Assurance (QA) Policy and Strategy

Please comment on:

- the Institution's policy and goals regarding QA and Improvement
- whether the Institution has developed a specific system of QA
- how the Institution's internal QA system has been organized
- how the students and staff of the Institution are protected from biased interventions and discriminations
- whether a detailed implementation guide has been put together, containing an analysis of the QA system's operating procedures
- the involvement of students in QA
- how the Institution evaluates the effectiveness of its QA system regarding the achievement of its goals

UoWM should be commended for supporting quality assurance and enhancement (in short QA), as an integral part of its mission; QA is a major priority for its further development policy and strategy. This is evidenced by the fact that personnel and other scarce resources are allocated to this effort. As a general observation, the University has all necessary elements ready to build a set of strong QA processes in the near future, leading eventually to national accreditation of its academic programmes. QA will help build a robust, high level of quality and competitiveness of the institution in Greece. It has also the potential to provide the basis for internationalization of its programmes and activities in Europe (and beyond). A future analysis should include a carefully chosen "basket of comparable institutions" in size and perceived quality, with a similar mix of faculties, not only from Greece, but also from different countries in Europe (and beyond).

Suggestions:

- The draft QA Regulations submitted to the Ministry of Education should be approved.
- The implementation of QA should cover all strategic goals (research, teaching, programmes, and services) as identified in the Self-Evaluation process. So far, most of the UoWM effort has focused on QA of the programmes, and to a lesser extend to related research activities and relationships with interested stakeholders. The latter have the potential to enhance the institutional quality and added value of UoWM to its local, national and international environments.
- QA processes should be defined in a way that includes a detailed description of the data selection method, data analysis and evaluation method, and pertinent actions and reactions/feedback. This way we make sure that QA is a set of processes that safeguard collection of all relevant data from stakeholders within the institution, implementation, control and transparency. Recommendations of previous evaluations should be dealt with in the QA processes.
- The QA processes should explain and justify matters pertaining to collecting and handling of personal data such as appropriateness of data size, respect of privacy, constitutional rights and be sufficiently robust to assure future academic quality review and actions for improvement in a rapidly changing and financially deteriorating environment. QA processes should be developed in such a way that contingencies are dealt with as rapidly as possible.
- The academic units should proactively increase their interaction and collaboration with the University Quality Assurance Unit (i.e. OMEAs and MODIP) so that they are better prepared for the future role of MODIP. It is noted that according to State planning, MODIP is expected to be assigned a substantial role and expected to be well aware of the available programmes, contribute to their development and eventually be their QA and accreditation body within the Institution.
- The Office of Career Networking services should be upgraded in order to enhance the connections (and impact) of UoWM with industry, public bodies and community supported

organizations, as well as the alumni of the University, including their endowments and donations.

Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (§4.1):

	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	X
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating:

The EEC understands that QA policy (and strategy) is still in its infancy in Greek HEIs. The UoWM apparently has the unequivocal will and momentum to thoroughly address this challenge top-down (this has to be coupled with bottom-up policy and strategies in the near future, see section 4.2). A barrier, however, seems to be that national-level processes are not in place yet to check, legitimize and evaluate the proposed institutional processes.

4.2 Design, approval, monitoring and evaluation of the study programmes and degrees awarded

Please comment on:

- whether the learning outcomes have been clearly formulated and whether they have been published
- whether the programmes are designed in such a way as to involve students and other stakeholders in the work
- how the achievement of learning outcomes is monitored
- whether there is a published Guide regarding the organization of programmes of study
- whether the ECTS system is taken into consideration and implemented
- whether there is a periodic evaluation of the programmes according to set procedures and criteria aimed at safeguarding their consistency and regular updating
- the student participation in the QA procedure of the study programmes
- whether the programmes include well-structured international mobility and -where appropriate- placement opportunities

The academic programmes of a School are designed, reviewed, and modified by its faculty on a regular basis. Assessment of Programmes is supervised by pertinent committees in the School, i.e. the Departmental QA Team (OMEA) that provides regular input to the MODIP (and related information systems and services). OMEAs, however, need to be linked formally to their Heads of Department so that there is a process put in place for taking appropriate actions for course monitoring and improvements at the point of contact with the relevant student bodies. Course sequencing is recommended by the School. Hence each student may plan his/her own individual study programme. The programmes have recently adopted the ECTS credit system. Students participate in QA of programmes in various ways, mainly through the course evaluations. Improving student attendance should be a priority of the Institution and steps have been taken already towards this direction (e.g. freshman orientation, advisor per class). The programmes include international mobility and placement opportunities for faculty and students. The Office of Career Services is used for such purposes with the EU ERASMUS+ programme, etc. The EEC noticed that there are arising numerous external constraints, chiefly imposed by the State Ministries, which significantly worsened the overall environment for enhancing quality of programmes, with significantly higher quotas of students for entry, loss of faculty as a result of on-going retirements, lack of available on-going recruits for new posts in all departments, etc.

Suggestions

- The programmes should clearly formulate and publish the associated learning outcomes and use qualitative and/or quantitative metrics to show their level of achievement. The learning outcomes should be compatible with the pertinent National (or European) Framework describing the qualities of graduates at any exit level of Higher Education. The Schools should then make sure that all graduates cover satisfactorily the above criteria and can be credibly assessed in this framework.
- The programme assessment process should be defined in terms of data selection, data analysis and evaluation methods, and pertinent actions and reactions/feedback, with clear leadership involvement, for assessing and rewarding quality enhancement both bottom-up (OMEA to Head of the Department to Faculty) and top-down (future Vice-Rector to MODIP to OMEAs). It should also be aligned with programme learning outcomes to National (or European) framework(s).
- Alternative methods should be identified to address the low student attendance of courses whenever existing methods do not work as expected (e.g. use of student ambassadors, student mentors, etc.).
- The Leadership of the Institution is urged to consider, in collaboration with the Schools, the merit of using prerequisite courses in different programmes of study as appropriate.
- EEC encourages the continuation and possible expansion of actions to strengthen not only the critical and academically reflective part of the learning outcomes, but also the practical/hands-on component in the academic programmes, such as small-group course projects, practical training, educational trips, etc.

Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (§4.2):

	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	X
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating:

Learning outcomes are not yet clearly defined and embedded in the UoWM courses. The student workload needs to be adjusted so that students will be encouraged to participate in the class and project work. OMEA needs to be linked formally to the Leadership of Departments and student bodies; and processes should be strengthened to take into account the student feedback and help the faculty improve their courses and satisfy the needs of students and linked stakeholders.

4.3 Teaching and learning - Assessment by students

Please comment on:

- whether multiple and coherent learning paths are provided according to the needs of students in the Institution's Departments / Faculties
- how proper guidance and support is offered to students by the Departments / Faculties' teaching staff (Informal, not formal)
- whether students are informed clearly and in detail regarding the strategy of evaluation that is implemented for their programme of study, the exams or other methods of assessment they will be subjected to, what is expected of them and which criteria will be applied for the evaluation of their performance
- whether there is a formal procedure for addressing complaints and objections by students in the Departments / Faculties of the Institution

By and large, the Institution does not provide multiple learning paths according to the needs of students in its Departments. Different programmes offer the ability to individual students to select areas of concentration within their degree. There is no considerable or deeply concerning overlap

of programmes among Departments, as these in general focus on different areas and concentrations. Still, as a result of faculty shortages some courses from different Departments are offered together in order to meet student's needs. Overall, the student-to-faculty ratio at the UoWM is 32.5 students per faculty member. This is probably the highest ratio among all Greek universities and that obviously is an issue of concern. The university's representatives are quite aware of this, but due to current economic conditions they acknowledge the difficulties of addressing the problem. Classrooms appear to be in decent condition while some buildings are in bad need for repair and refurbishing. The administration has plans for improvement through EU funding but there are legislative impediments that still need to be overcome. The laboratory infrastructure in the Polytechnic and School of Fine and Applied Arts are adequate but there is ample room for improvement. Currently, their size appears sufficient to the size of the student body and faculty members have not raised the issue of multiple sections as an on-going problem. As in all Greek universities exam periods are quite long and take away from time that could be devoted to teaching.

In general, students seem to be informed adequately about assessment criteria and other aspects of their course performance. There is an online system that facilitates easy and direct communication between faculty and students. That appears to be the only formal means of offering guidance and support to students. Both students and faculty have reported no problems regarding evaluation strategies, exams or other methods of assessment, or expectations. However, there are very low response rates to the ADIP questionnaires and these render the information practically inadequate to the task of providing information on the students' views. In part, that is the result of (a) the questionnaire being filled on line, which leads to greater non-response rates; and (b) the questionnaire's large size (50 or so questions) which render it cumbersome for respondents. In the Committee's view both issues should be dealt with. That should enable the UoWM to gain a more accurate insight into students' perception and subsequently develop strategies to address the emerging issues.

Mostly, both students and faculty have highlighted the fact that students feel close to their teachers and frequently ask for advice in informal ways. The students' easy access to faculty members is also a way to maximize interaction; the small size of the university contributes greatly to the effectiveness of this approach and students and faculty highlight this experience as one that clearly marks off this institution from the bigger and far more impersonal universities in Athens or Thessaloniki. The student body amounts to 1.24% of the total student population nationwide. But it should be noted that students frequently ask for transfer to other universities or fail to attend at all. That is an issue of concern that requires developing suitable strategies to address it.

It is indicative of the total absence of processes designed to address student concerns that the UoWM appears to lack even a formal procedure for addressing complaints and/or objections by students. The UoWM does not appear to have developed the necessary guidelines for addressing disciplinary matters and that set of issues seems currently to be handled in a *post hoc* or unstructured manner by the Rector, using a need-based strategy.

Suggestions

- It is self-evident that the high student to faculty ratio should be urgently addressed by all parties involved within and outside of the Institution.
- It is also extremely important to address the high numbers of students who are not active or those who ask for transfer to other institutions. The UoWM does not appear to be an attractive academic destination for students nationwide. In order UoWM to be viable in the long run, this issue has to be addressed.
- It is critically important to obtain reliable student feedback and then to develop strategies for addressing the issues rose. There is a long road to be travelled, and the University is still in its early steps.
- The UoWM should develop disciplinary guidelines and should move away from a need-based strategy of addressing such matters.

Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (§4.3):

	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	X
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating:

This rating reflects the empirical observations made by the EEC during its visit as well as the other information provided by the UoWM.

4.4 Admission of students, progression and recognition of studies

Please comment on:

- whether the procedures and criteria for admission to the second and third cycle of studies are implemented with consistency and transparency
- whether there are clear and distinct procedures within the Departments/Faculties, as regards recognition of higher education degrees, periods of study and knowledge acquired at an earlier stage
- whether there are clear and distinct procedures of recognition of study periods and prior learning (including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning)
- whether there are clear procedures in place regarding the cooperation of other Institutions with national ENIC/NARIC centres for ensuring coherent recognition and mobility among programmes within / among Institution (s)
- whether students are provided with detailed information (e.g. Diploma Supplement) regarding the degrees conferred to them, the achieved learning outcomes as well as the framework, the level and the content of studies they successfully completed
- whether the Institution has in place processes and tools to collect, monitor and use information regarding student progression

The EEC has not been informed regarding procedures and criteria for admission to the second and third cycles of studies, nor was any information offered concerning matters of consistency and transparency. The UoWM offers a large number of such studies and faculty appear quite proud of the large pool of applicants, yet no details have been offered with regard to the aforementioned issues. Upon further inquiry, the EEC has been informed that the UoWM has developed Guidelines for post-graduate and doctoral studies, but that these have not been entered into law yet. Consequently, issues of consistency and transparency concerning procedures and criteria for admission to the second and third cycle of studies are dealt with in different ways by different programmes. The EEC has not studied the proposed Guidelines, as these are not in effect yet, but applauds the Institution's efforts to develop them.

The UoWM is participant to the ENIC/NARIC network of centres that ensure coherent recognition and mobility among programmes among participating institutions. More specifically, exchange students (e.g. Erasmus) are recognized according to fairly standardized procedures. The University has implemented the ECTS system and as a result there are clear procedures of recognition of study periods and prior learning received in other Greek universities or in non-Greek universities that use the ECTS system. The University also offers Diploma Supplement, whereby students are provided with detailed information regarding the degrees conferred to them, the achieved learning outcomes as well as the framework, the level and the content of studies they successfully completed.

Recognition of non-formal and informal learning is not foreseen.

The UoWM has implemented an efficient electronic system that provides students with detailed information about their degree including student transcripts and course descriptions. In general,

the institution has in place well developed processes and tools to collect, monitor and use information regarding student progress and recognition of studies.

Comments:

The number of prospective post-graduate students is quite high. The same is true for the number of post-graduate programmes. It is necessary to have Guidelines for Graduate Studies to address issues of consistency and transparency. No information has been provided on the non-completion rate for PhD students, but informal statements have been made that the rate is rather high. There are no requirements concerning coursework in PhD programs. Informal statements by PhD students tend to be positive regarding their supervisors, but there are no requirements in place to ensure that prospective PhD candidates gain sufficient exposure to a variety of scientific perspectives or that they are required to go for a semester to another institution as part of their learning.

<i>Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (§4.4):</i>	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	X
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating:

This rating reflects the empirical observations made by the EEC during its visit as well as the other information provided by the UoWM.

4.5 Quality Assurance as regards the teaching staff

Please comment on:

- how it is guaranteed that the vacancy notices and recruitment of teaching staff include procedures which provide assurance that all new teaching staff members have at least the basic teaching skills
- opportunities offered to the teaching staff for their professional/scientific advancement
- how potential weaknesses of the teaching staff are identified as regards the delivery of their teaching courses
- the Institution's procedures for the support of new teaching staff as regards the teaching and evaluation methods
- how scientific activity is assessed and encouraged among the teaching staff in order to strengthen the connection between education and research
- the procedures in place so that the teaching staff members receive the necessary feedback on their personal performance as well as on the opinion of students
- whether a regulatory framework is in place for the investigation of disciplinary and academic misconduct of the teaching staff

At present, recruitment of faculty is stalled, while the retirement of faculty members continues aggravating faculty shortages. The UoWM faculty recruitment and hiring process follows the national guidelines. These are dictated by law. As a result, the procedure is well-documented. This provides assurances that faculty recruitment could meet or exceed a certain level of competence for QA assurance, teaching and research purposes. Opportunities for career advancement are offered to the faculty through secondment to other Greek universities, via the Erasmus programme, or sabbatical leave.

Potential weaknesses of faculty in curriculum development and delivering their courses are normally identified through monitoring of the course evaluation questionnaires completed by

students. Scientific activity of the faculty is reflected in their annual reports which are collected by the OMEAs and forwarded to MODIP. Detailed assessment of the teaching and related research is performed during the hiring or promotion process.

Faculty members receive the necessary feedback on their personal teaching performance through course evaluations completed by the students. While faculty performance data is collected, there is no overall institutional strategy to address issues of teaching and research or negotiating the balance between the two. The UoWM does not appear to have in place procedures for the support of new teaching staff as regards the teaching and evaluation methods. Course evaluations are the only available tool, and these of course -due to their low response rate- are not entirely trustworthy. As course evaluations by students is just one dimension in the evaluating the instructional performance of faculty, other dimensions in the process (such as peer-review or informal evaluation of teaching by colleagues or the development of a teaching dossier) could be developed and utilized to allow faculty members develop a more complete picture of their instructional performance. The MODIP should then be able to assess how successfully various shortcomings were addressed.

No regulatory framework exists in place for the investigation of disciplinary and academic misconduct of the teaching staff. That framework should be developed.

<i>Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (§4.5):</i>	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	X
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating:

This rating reflects the empirical observations made by the EEC during its visit as well as the other information provided by the UoWM.

4.6 Learning resources and student support

Please comment on:

- whether there are procedures for the systematic monitoring, evaluation, review and improvement of the appropriateness and effectiveness of supporting services available to students (Nothing beyond the student evaluation survey and an open-door policy)
- the available support services in regard to Libraries, Information systems and infrastructure (library is insufficiently endowed for a University)
- the procedure in place for offering individual assistance (counselling and tutoring) to students (not, especially given the under-staffing issue)

The UoWM does not appear to have developed specific procedures concerning the systematic monitoring, review and improvement of its supporting services. The University's small size makes people confident that "they will know" if something goes wrong. It is important that the UoWM develops mechanisms and procedures in order to successfully monitor supportive services provided to students.

The UoWM has two library buildings, one in each city. These are clearly at a very unsatisfactory level for a university. For example, the library in Florina is comparable to the library of a small college in the early 1990s, and is nowhere near the level suitable for a higher learning institution of the 21st century. As elsewhere in Greece, problems were identified with respect to the electronic access to full-text online journals due to a substantial reduction in the library's operational funds. Obviously, the university should aim to build a strong digital library and partnerships with foreign institutions that could provide remote access to students.

At the Kozani “campus”, the information systems infrastructure appears at a more satisfactory level. The same is true for the graphics ICT-based infrastructure at the School of Fine and Applied Arts. Obviously, the funding cuts impose a genuine threat for the smooth operation of universities everywhere, both in terms of student support, but also for the academics and supervisors of students. The EEC observed the lack of lab technicians and assistants in the university’s labs, which forces students to play this role. That is an important shortcoming that should be addressed.

The EEC has further noted that the presentation of faculty web pages at the university’s website is not entirely satisfactory in the sense of them being easily accessible through web search engines. Often, one needs to move through several intervening web pages before reaching a faculty member’s website. That is an issue of web design that should be rectified.

Up until fairly recently, counselling and tutoring to students has been a matter left entirely upon individual faculty members and their own initiatives. There is no university-wide system or trained professionals to assist students. There is no Learning Centre, for example. The UoWM has recently implemented the operation of a mentoring system, which should formally match students to advisors. That could greatly increase the level of assistance. But it is quite clear that much more could be done.

Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (§4.6):

	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	X
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating:

This rating reflects the empirical observations made by the EEC during its visit as well as the other information provided by the UoWM.

4.7 Information Systems for Recording and Analysing Data and Indicators

Please comment on:

- whether the Institution possesses reliable means for collecting, analysing and utilizing valid information in respect to key performance indicators, the profile of the student population and student progression, success and drop-out rates
- whether the Institution possesses reliable means for collecting, analysing and utilizing valid information regarding its other functions and activities
- whether the Institution collects information about student satisfaction with their programmes of study and the career paths offered to graduates
- whether the Institution seeks comparison with other similar establishments within and beyond the European Higher Education Area, with a view to developing self-awareness and finding ways to improve its operation

The local MODIP has developed a system for collecting, analysing and using valid data with regard to performance indicators, the students’ profiles and success and drop-out rates. It is clear though that the local MODIP needs to do considerably more in terms of extending, developing and building up the system in order to produce meaningful results.

To date, the UoWM has implemented only the student questionnaires to survey the students as to their opinion of the courses they attend, which include questions relevant to the course, instructors, texts, and labs. Because these questionnaires are filled on-line they have a very low rate of return. It is clear that the response rate should increase and the local MODIP should develop additional tools for collecting relevant information.

The EEC **recommends** that the University adopt more effective procedures. It is furthermore quite important for the UoWM to develop procedures that safeguard personal information relevant to both the student and the instructor whose course is evaluated.

Further work is necessary to tailor the questionnaires to specific needs. The local MODIP appears to have simply copied the ADIP suggested questionnaire and the result is that important discrepancies appear. For example, students could be asked to evaluate a lab or another activity that is not, in fact, part of the curriculum for a specific course. The EEC **recommends** that the MODIP use the suggested questionnaire as a basis and then tailor the actual questionnaires in a manner that address the actual course activities. The questionnaire should further be cut down in order to be user-friendly. The departmental quality assurance team (OMEA) should have formal access to all the data as does the Chair of the Department. The students, upon request, should be able to see aggregated statistics. The EEC **recommends** that the student questionnaire be supplemented by additional instruments (such as peer reviews of teaching, and/or a teaching dossier). That should offer a more complete evaluation of the instructional activities accomplished.

The University also collects data relevant to the research and other activities of the faculty on an annual basis. The University collects numerous statistical data such as the number of students, the number of active students (i.e. students whose studies have not extended further than 2 years from the nominal duration), number of faculty, number of staff, expenses, research funding etc. However, it is evident that, while the UoWM has a very clear understanding of its own position within Greece's system of higher education, it does not have performed any tasks concerning the identification of its own position in comparison with other similar establishments within and beyond the European Higher Education Area. The EEC **recommends** that a group of institutions, comparable in size, the number and types of programmes offered, and perceived quality, be identified from several EU countries and beyond. Then, the MODIP should seek reliable data from the identified institutions to compare. That would enable the UoWM to perform a task of benchmarking, whereby it could establish its own standing vis-a-vis similar institutions. That could become the basis for further improvement.

<i>Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (§4.7):</i>	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	X
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating:

This rating reflects the empirical observations made by the EEC during its visit as well as the other information provided by the UoWM.

4.8 Dissemination of information to stakeholders

Please comment on:

- how the Institution sees publicising information on the programmes offered, the expected learning outcomes, the degrees awarded, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures it uses and the learning opportunities it offers to students
- whether the information regarding the Institution's offered programmes of study is available in English or in other languages
- whether the teaching staff's CVs are included in the publicized information, both in Greek and in English

The University has undertaken efforts to ensure that its programmes, faculty and activities are publicized. One of the vehicles used is its web presence through the official University of Western Macedonia website (<http://uowm.gr>). The website is well organized and is presented in both Greek and English versions. The website organizes and presents many aspects of university activity including programmes of study, the organization of the university, research, as well as information about the departments and faculty. Most of the important information will be found

with links to Department websites which is not helpful for stakeholders to have a general idea about the University. The presentation is non-uniform, especially as it becomes more specialized at the department and laboratory level.

The teaching staff's CVs are included in the publicized information (including elements of their CVs, such as lists of publications, courses taught, students graduated etc.). This information about teaching staff's CV is not so easy to be found by students, enterprises and other stakeholders that wish to establish a new contact.

The EEC would like to **recommend** that the University should develop a uniform framework of the programmes offered, the expected learning outcomes, the degrees awarded, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures it uses and the learning opportunities it offers to students (education site) and should have at the main page (research site) a list of knowledge areas offered by the University including the teaching staff's information (short CV) so that it would be easier for stakeholders to navigate and access the sought for information.

The Departmental websites are well organized and include a rich set of information and indicators relevant to the unit and are available in print (Curriculum guide etc.).

Publicity with leaflets of the offered courses and research and innovation capabilities to the regional stakeholders and the book «ΠΑΜΕ... ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ 2016» from Mixaloudi S. and Pavlako N. are important contributions to disseminate information to stakeholders.

Orientation weeks and public demonstrations are offered by the University. It is **recommended** to enhance the open weeks to the public in general and invite the regional schools for lectures and research activities adapted to children, with objective to stimulate the interest for science of the younger population of the region and to learn about the innovations and capacities offered in the University.

The system DASTA (Δομή Απασχόλησης και Σταδιοδρομίας) is worthy of merit and a positive step in dissemination of information to stakeholders. It can be found in <http://dasta.uowm.gr/> and is organized by a team of 5 people led from professor Kikinidi E. It has a site for connection of the University with the society (dasta.uowm.gr/career) a site for assisting students to find stage in their practice obligations (dasta.uowm.gr/internship) and a site for connection of the University with enterprises (dasta.uowm.gr/innovation) and gives opportunities to students find a job or create their own business.

Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (§4.8):

	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	X
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating:

Need for a more directly accessible CVs (one-click recommended, not three or four clicks as now)

4.9 Continuous monitoring and periodic review of the study programmes

Please comment on:

- the procedure followed with regard to assessment and periodic review of the contents of study programmes
- whether this procedure takes into account the changing needs of society
- whether this procedure takes into consideration the findings emanating from monitoring the graduates' career paths
- the procedure with which the reviews take into account the students' work load, the progress rate and completion of studies
- whether this procedure takes into account the cutting edge research activities in that particular discipline
- whether the involvement of students and other stakeholders is secured in the revision of the programmes

The UoWM has applied the process of evaluating its programmes of study. This process includes the establishment of the University Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP) and the departmental Quality Assurance Teams (OMEA). These entities have worked cooperatively and have established the processes and the necessary instruments (surveys, software) for collecting data, primarily course evaluation data and department and staff activity data. This data has been tabulated and statistically analysed. The procedure followed with regard to assessment and periodic review of the contents of study programmes is starting with OMEA that collects all the proposed changes and the general assembly of the department approves the changes and if necessary the transition period.

However, the feedback process about how the information collected by MODIP is used to improve the curriculum of the programmes of study, has not been established yet, but there are plans that any proposed changes will be checked by MODIP.

The data already being collected by MODIP should include quantitative data regarding the career paths of the graduates, the opinion of the graduates and their employers about the quality, completeness and usefulness of the knowledge and skills acquired during the graduates' studies at the University. During this procedure it should be collected data about the changing needs of society.

The procedure of monitoring and reviewing the study programmes take into account the students' work load, the progress rate and completion of studies and with the help of the presence of student representatives in both OMEA and MODIP.

It is unclear whether this procedure takes into account the cutting edge research activities in that particular discipline and in the revision of the programmes the involvement of external stakeholders (local authorities, enterprises, and society) it is not taken into consideration yet.

In addition, each programme of study needs to establish a method of measuring the expected outcomes. Such information could then be used to inform changes to the curriculum and measure the impact of such changes. In other words, the University should strive to develop a more robust system of quality assurance.

Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (§4.9):

	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	X
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating: The University already developed a system of Monitoring for periodic review of the study programmes but some steps are still to be done.

4.10 Periodic external evaluation

Please comment on:

- the procedure already planned by the Institution in order to deal with the observations of the Institutional External evaluation
- how the anticipated implementation of plans by Departments / Faculties is monitored in response to any comments included in their external evaluation and in the accreditation of their programmes

This was the first Institutional External Evaluation and the University welcomes this procedure and is planning to use the conclusions to achieve the objectives of the Institution.

The Departments of the University that have been evaluated in the past years had to respond to MODIP (Quality Assurance Unit) about how they will solve the problems mentioned by the internal and external evaluations and give answers to the recommendations for improvement. The external evaluation committees of the Departments found in general that the programmes offered are of good quality; however they made several recommendations. MODIP and the departmental QA teams (OMEA), has received the reports of the external evaluation committees and started implementing them. However, during the EEC meeting MODIP could not report about the percentage of the recommendations implemented and the University had to ask the departments to provide written reports, one per department, describing in detail all the actions that were taken in order to address the recommendations which were included in the corresponding External Assessment Reports. In most cases actions were taken in order to promote solutions. Many recommendations identified external factors related to policies and resources dictated by the Greek State (like inadequate size of classrooms to the admitted number of students, need for equipment renovation, etc.). The University tries its best to improve the budget for education and research infrastructure, and to increase the teaching staff per student ratio that is among the lowest in Greece.

The EEC is not satisfied with the lack of reporting about the degree of implementation of the recommendations of the external evaluation committees. However, the EEC is satisfied that there is an established procedure and a responsible authority that encourages and will monitor the implementation of these recommendations.

The EEC would like to recommend that the University establish a timetable with targets to be achieved and implement the recommendations of the external evaluations.

The UoWM is anticipating the external evaluation for the accreditation of their study programmes and is alerting the Departments to prepare for this accreditation that will be monitored from MODIP.

<i>Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (§4.10):</i>	
Worthy of merit	Tick
Positive evaluation	X
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating: The University has already developed a system of monitoring of the external evaluations, but some steps are still to be taken (e.g. degree of implementation, timetable of targets to achieve)

4.11 Internal System of Quality Assurance – Conclusions and recommendations

Please complete the following sections regarding the *internal system of quality assurance*:

- *Underline specific positive points:*
 1. The efficient and active University Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP)
 2. The efficient and active Departmental Quality Assurance teams (OMEA)
 3. Development of the Software Frameworks (for MODIP use)
- *Underline specific negative points:*
 1. The absence of a set of QA processes in general
 2. The limited resources with regard to staff supporting MODIP and OMEA especially in the long term.
- *Make your suggestions for further development of the positive points:*
 1. The creation of the MODIP Software Frameworks infrastructure needs to be maintained and developed in the future. As such, the EEC would like to recommend that the University should establish stable resources dedicated to its long-term quality and maintenance.
 2. The EEC would like to recommend that the Quality Assurance Units (both at the University level and at the departmental level) need to establish formal relations and reporting to the University and departmental structures that monitor the implementation of recommendations.
- *Make your suggestions on needed steps for improvement:*
 1. The EEC would like to recommend that the University continue with the development of a robust internal system of quality assurance.
 2. The EEC would like to recommend that the University modify its survey instruments so as to include the possibility of entering free-form comments.
 3. The EEC would like to recommend that the University develop processes that would utilize the results collected by MODIP in course evaluations to improve the programme of studies.
 4. The EEC would like to recommend that a University-level Teaching Centre be established that would develop instructional techniques and help University professors to improve their teaching styles and abilities.
 5. The EEC would like to recommend that the University establishes policies and a structure that would encourage and implement the recommendations of the external evaluations.

5. OPERATION OF THE CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE INSTITUTION

5.1 Central Administration Services of the Institution

Please comment on:

- The operation of the central administration services of the Institution in regard to the:
Special Account for Research Funds (SARF)
Financial services
Supplies department
Technical services
IT services
Student support services
Employment and Career Centre (ECC)
Public/ International relations department
Foreign language services
Social and cultural activities
Halls of residence and refectory services
Institution's library

The EEC met with the heads of each of the administrative services groups and Mr Thomas Mpelias, the Secretary General of University. Mr Mpelias presented the functions and services offered by each group. The presentations were supplemented with documents provided to the EEC and visit of the main administrative building of the University and its facilities. The EEC was impressed by the professionalism, dedication, and can-do attitude of the administrative services. The EEC was also impressed by the contingency plans to absorb any potential shocks due to central government circular regulatory changes and the collaboration between personnel to cover any gaps. Out of this interaction, our impression is that the administrative services team provides excellent support to teaching and research programmes. EEC also supports any effort to increase administrative personnel.

The EEC was positively impressed with the use of IT and associated services for central administration services of the Institution, but not impressed by how effectively IT is handled at the University installations. Although the IT services support the buildings, provision of Wi-Fi does not cover all spaces. IT services are handled in a fragmented way with unknown impact on security and ability to secure economies of scale.

For the secretary of Senate the IT system used is HARICA.

For the academic services is used the system Cardisoft that needs to be upgraded. There is care for students with special needs and occasionally the problems are solved by the staff when they appear, but only in Florina there are adequate installations for people with special needs.

The Research Committee of the University has its own IT tools and website (<http://rc.uowm.gr/>).

The International relations office works well and has sufficient number of actions for the size of the University.

There is sufficient number of Social and cultural activities, taken into consideration the size of the University.

Halls of residence do not exist and the University has a very limited number of residences offered. The refectory services exist in both cities of Kozani and Florina and the large majority of students have free meals. It was mentioned there are some complains for the quality of the Kozani refectory services.

Employment and Career Centre (ECC) was mentioned already in chapter 4.8 Dissemination of information to stakeholders. Data about it can be found in <http://dasta.uowm.gr/>. Such information could be a strong point of the Institution. This initiative should be further enforced. However it has unstable financial resources that threaten the continuity and quality of services.

The Institution's libraries are two (one in each city) and have the adequate staff and opening hours but very limited resources, as mentioned previously.

No Supplies department and Technical services staff exists, and those services are performed through the department of finances.

There is a Special Account for Research Funds, with one member of staff.

Administrative services have 10 members (8 in Kozani and 2 in Florina) and Financial services have 4 members; they appear to work well, but new staff is needed especially for the legal affairs of the Institution; this is urgent.

Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (§5.1):

	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	X
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating: The EEC was impressed by the professionalism, dedication, and can-do attitude of the administrative services. IT services should be improved. New staff for legal affairs should be hired.

5.2 Operation of the Central Administration of the Institution – Conclusions and recommendations

Please complete the following sections regarding the operation of the Institution's central administration :

- *Underline specific positive points:*
 1. Professionalism, dedication, and can-do attitude of the administrative services
 2. Use of IT services
- *Underline specific negative points:*
 1. Fragmentation of IT services
 2. Lack of staff in legal affairs
 3. Limited support for student housing
- *Make your suggestions for further development of the positive points:*
 1. Continuous training of the staff.
 2. Create appropriate facilities and services for people with special needs, providing solutions that are fast and discrete.
 3. Use the data collected from the QA system of MODIP to improve the operational processes of the administration and evaluate and reward the staff.
 4. Encourage the staff of the Research and other relevant Committees of the University to become proactive in revenue generation and entrepreneurial spirit.
- *Make your suggestions on needed steps for improvement:*
 1. Hiring staff in legal affairs
 2. Upgrade and improve the Cardisoft software, and of other IT services.
 3. Care for student housing. Provide up to date information about availability of housing in the private sector.

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In connection with the

- general operation of the Institution
- development of the Institution to this date and its present situation
- Institution's readiness and capability to change/improve
- Internal system of Quality Assurance of the Institution

please complete the following sections:

Until fairly recently, the UoWM was governed by an externally appointed body and as a result the institution's faculty remained relatively uninvolved and uninformed about opportunities and capabilities. This has been a serious administrative impediment that has taken a very long time to rectify. The UoWM also survived a series of attempts to revoke its administrative independence. This has contributed to a siege mentality, whereby faculty and staff felt that they were under continuous threat. These developments have hardly contributed to the institution's self-confidence and self-assurance about the institution itself and its future.

The administration as well as the faculties appear open to some degree of change, to the extent allowed by the excessive embrace by the State. Their capability of making substantial changes and adjustments, however, depends primarily on the State's paradigm in handling higher education issues and goals. Hence, the mentality, met in Greek higher education, could change from narrow bureaucratic and dependence on the State for most funding and important decision making to far-sighted strategic planning and willingness to undertake bold initiatives. It should be added, however, that the above is coupled with strong personal willingness to serve and display of loyalty to the institution. All this clearly motivates both administrative and academic staff, despite on-going challenges. The administration appears to have realized the limits of the siege mentality and appears willing to move forward. Because the UoWM has only recently gained full autonomy, there seems to be a willingness to show capacity for self-governance and action.

In the EEC's view the main challenges include underfunding by the State, student numbers and level, attractiveness to students, number of staff, lack of a unified campus, diversity of academic disciplines, size; all these factors have a bearing on the operation of the university.

In order to face these challenges, a strategic plan undertaken in consultation with all relevant parties, is essential. Ability and readiness to improve should be reflected on the strategic plan and its implementation.

The internal system of Quality Assurance of UoWM is still in its early steps of development and requires considerable further work, in order to become appropriate for a higher education institution.

- *Underline specific positive points:*

1. The EEC ascertained strong intentions for quality assurance and enhancement at UoWM.
 2. The academic leadership show commitment and determination to improve quality and are working as a team towards excellence, as one of their common goals.
 3. UoWM has self-motivated, dynamic and recognized faculty.
 4. Several research units at UoWM are productive, visible, and deliver good-quality research.
- There is an engagement with the local industry (esp. DEI, the State Electricity Company) and community.

- *Underline specific negative points:*

1. The EEC found a negative external environment, imposing excessive bureaucracy and regulatory interference, thus inhibiting the ability of UoWM to operate effectively and implement its goals.

<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. The EEC sees a need to strengthen outward-looking policies and activities, removing barriers for internal collaborations, outreach activities, and substantial external partnerships. 3. The mission statement and strategic goals of UoWM as formulated in the Internal Evaluation Report and discussed with the leadership are overly broad and difficult to implement. There is a lack of a clear priority-setting mechanism and an absence of clarity in pursuit of a common vision. 4. Although quality assurance is becoming an integrated part of UoWM life, added effort is needed to ensure a widespread acceptance of quality principles and establishment of appropriate processes at all levels of the academic community. 5. The EEC found that there is need for stronger coordination between the quality assurance entities (i.e., MODIP and OMEA) and academic units (i.e., Departments and Schools). This would develop a suitable environment for fulfilling the goals of QA. 6. EEC found a need to better coordinate and implement the Institution's research policy. 7. The size, dispersion, and diversity of the Institution need to be thoroughly addressed, since they may produce serious obstacles to the viability of the Institution.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Make your suggestions for further development of the positive points:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop a set of processes and metrics that will support QA and continuous monitoring, assessment, and enhancement of programmes of study within UoWM. 2. Strengthen research development activity and ensure coordination among the leadership that would streamline all relevant research processes, including postgraduate courses. This would better focus research strengths and enhance visibility and the impact of UoWM on local economy and society. 3. Establish through existing structures, an office of development that creates communities (e.g. an alumni association), cultivates relationships (e.g. student placement and career development, and networking) and generates fundraising opportunities. 4. Enhance outward-looking policies to increase further synergies and partnerships both outside and within the Institution. Identify and strengthen support to niche research and collaborations in both research and educational subjects.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Make your suggestions on needed steps for improvement:</i> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Develop and implement a pragmatic strategic planning process to ensure viability and set priorities for the Institution as a whole and for each individual School and Department, with an explicitly defined set of targets and time-lines. 2. Showcase best practices within the Institution and provide an incentive structure to reward best practices in teaching, research, professional activities, and service to the community.

6.1 Final decision of the EEC

Please decide in respect to the overall Institutional evaluation:	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	X
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating: The EEC has stated its own opinion and evaluation of the UoWM in the section 6 above. This statement offers the EEC's assessment of strengths and weaknesses, as well as its own list of suggestions for further improvement. The rating requested reduces the complexity of the issues involved into a single numerical score and that is, of course, quite simplistic; it might also be misleading, especially if attention is given only to the score itself. The EEC has decided to give to UoWM a positive evaluation. This score sums up the individual scores as these have been recorded in individual tables throughout this report (2 times "Worthy of Merit", 13 times "Positive Evaluation", and 11 times "Partially Positive Evaluation").

There are many different ways to weight these scores and numerous different approaches toward constructing the final tally. But reducing the complexity of these matters is highly doubtful and the EEC is of the opinion that this final assessment is fair and balanced, while preserving the ability for divergent interpretations.

The Members of the Committee

UNIVERSITY OF WESTERN MACEDONIA

Name and Surname

Signature

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