



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



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Accreditation Report
for the Undergraduate Study Programme of:

Primary Education

Institution: Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Date: 12 June 2021

Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the Undergraduate Study Program of **Primary Education** of the **Aristotle University of Thessaloniki** for the purposes of granting accreditation

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PART A: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW

I. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the Undergraduate Study Program of **Primary Education** of the **Aristotle University of Thessaloniki** comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

- 1. Prof. Panayota Gounari (Chair)**
University of Massachusetts Boston, Boston, MA, USA

- 2. Prof. Athanasios Gagatsis**
University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus

- 3. Prof. Mary Kalantzis**
University of Illinois, Champaign, IL, USA

- 4. Prof. Anastasia Kitsantas**
George Mason University, Fairfax, VA, USA

- 5. Prof. Leonidas Kyriakides**
University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

The accreditation of the Primary Education Undergraduate Program at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH) was conducted fully in a remote mode, using the Zoom teleconferencing tool, due to restrictions associated with the global COVID-19 pandemic. The Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (HAHE) provided the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel (EEAP) members with accreditation materials ahead of the review process that included: the Department's Accreditation Proposal, a Quality Assurance Policy document for the Undergraduate Program, the Undergraduate Student Guide in Greek and in English, documentation on the legal framework, policy and program bylaws, course descriptions, Quality Goal Setting, and Quality Data for the period 2015-2019, as well as a wealth of supportive material and appendices, including presentations with detailed data, student and faculty demographics, sample student evaluations, a list of faculty publications and so forth. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel further examined the Department's [website](#) (both Greek and English versions) that contained important information about the curriculum, coursework, enrolment, faculty profiles, announcements, a video with facilities, classrooms, and buildings and a substantial amount of useful content and links for students, faculty and visitors. The EEA panel was also provided with HAHE's accreditation guidelines and was invited to attend an orientation session before the accreditation visit.

The EEAP met as a committee on Zoom before the accreditation, on 7/7 to plan ahead, coordinate division of work and process to be followed, and to discuss any issues that emerged from the preliminary study of the material received by HAHE.

The virtual accreditation visit extended over three days, starting on Tuesday, June 8th. On the first day, the EEAP met with the Vice Rector for Academic & Student Affairs and President of MODIP, Prof. Dimitrios Kovaïos, and with Prof. Periklis Pavlidis, Head of the Department of Primary Education for an introductory session and an overview of the program. We, then, met with OMEA and MODIP representatives to discuss compliance with the Quality Standards for Accreditation. Our last meeting for Day #1 was with faculty members from a variety of ranks.

On the second day of our visit, we met with a group of current students at different points in their degrees. We, then, met with administrative staff (including the head of the Department's secretariat) and with faculty members who are heads of labs or centers; during that same meeting we were given a virtual tour to the Program's facilities through a recorded video. In the afternoon, we met with a group of alumni, concluding Day #2 with a teleconference with social partners.

Day #3 was dedicated to wrapping up our visit with meetings with OMEA and MODIP representatives and the Department Head and Vice Rector of Academic Affairs. The Department welcomed us with warmth, collegiality and openness and they were all eager to answer our questions and engage in constructive conversations. Their presentations were informative, particularly the one prepared by OMEA, emphasizing the University's and Department's commitment to quality improvement in teaching, research and community outreach through a social commitment to public education.

From our interactions and conversations with representatives of the Department, leadership, faculty members and administrative staff, current students and alumni, as well as community partners we recognized that the Department takes its commitment to quality assurance seriously and is working in collaboration with MODIP towards more compliance to the HAHE quality standards, while remaining committed to its core values and vision.

In closing, the EEAP would like to note the challenges of conducting an accreditation virtually. Despite the flawless organization of the virtual visit on the part of our hosts, we feel that an on-site visit would have given us a much better sense of the work that is taking place, would have done justice to the Department's achievements, and would have given the committee more opportunities for formal and informal conversations that would have further enriched this report.

III. Study Program Profile

The Department of Primary Education was founded in the academic year 1986-1987, and in 1989 it became part of the newly founded School of Education of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. The Department was created with the goal of fostering and promoting the field of education studies through the academic, scientific and applied teaching and research, as well as the rigorous formation of educators by equipping them with the necessary and appropriate academic and professional knowledge, skills, and competences. In addressing this mission, the Primary Education Undergraduate Program has designed and developed a curriculum that extends to 8 semesters (or four years) and is made up of fifty-nine (59) courses or 240 ECTS.

The Department comprises four divisions: the *Division of Social and Cultural Studies*, the *Division of Sciences and New Technologies*, the *Division of Pedagogy and Social Inclusion*, and the more recently created *Division of Minority Education* (2017) that are further supported by different research labs and centers: The Centre for the Study of Reading and Writing in Education and Society, the Centre of Pedagogical Research and the Centre for the Digital Analysis and Design of Learning Tools; the Centre for Inclusive Policy, the Practicum Office and the Greek Digital Earth Centre of Excellence for Geographic Education.

The Department comprises twenty-seven faculty members, four EDIP (Special Laboratory Instructional Staff) members, two EEP (Special Research Staff) members, and two ETEP (Special Technical Laboratory Staff) members; and one head administrator and six administrative staff members. It also employs four educators under contract, three teaching fellows and five faculty members from other departments. It currently has 2,081 students enrolled, with 1,380 registered in regular semesters, and approximately 300+ new incoming students enrolling every year. The student/faculty ratio is 56.3: 1 on students enrolled in regular semesters and 77: 1 on the total number of students, while graduation rate is at 65-67 % (one of the highest across AUTH) with an average 7.65 cumulative GPA (based on data from last three years).

The Department's facilities, including faculty and staff offices and classrooms are mostly housed in the central building, the impressive Tower of Pedagogy. However, the Department also makes use of a set of prefabricated bungalows (Iyomena), as well as the building that used to house the Teaching Academy (Didaskaleio).

The Department focuses on the design and delivery of high-quality education programs adhering to an orientation and policies that support continuous improvement and meeting the educational and societal needs at hand. The curriculum is consistent with best practices in teacher education, including a focus on the synergy between theory and practice, student-centered curricula and scaffolding knowledge, meaningful and well-structured Practica in a network of 100 primary school classrooms in Thessaloniki, and an orientation towards reflective critical practice. The ultimate goal of the Department is to prepare democratic educators who understand the complexity of contemporary educational phenomena and are ready to apply their knowledge and skills in educational contexts in the direction of transforming society through the principles of equity, justice freedom and equality.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

Principle 1: Academic Unit Policy for Quality Assurance

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

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

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

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

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

Study Program Compliance

The Quality Assurance Policy of the Primary Education Undergraduate Program is aligned with the Strategic Plan and Quality Assurance Policy of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. The program's quality assurance procedures are monitored by the University's Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP) that collaborates with the Department's Quality Assurance Unit (OMEA). In general, the Quality Assurance Policy aims to support the academic content and scientific

orientation of the undergraduate program in accordance with international academic standards and the current national legal framework. To that extent, there are overlapping policies in place for improving education and research, teaching and learning, department processes and services, working conditions and quality of life, transparency at all levels, promotion of the Department's work at the societal and policy level, as well as in the international academic community.

The Department's Quality Policy is materialized through a commitment to complying with the legal and regulatory framework of the Department and the University through the institution, review, redesign and redefinition of quality assurance goals. Furthermore, such policy extends to the continual monitoring and improvement of human resources, curricula, outreach, mobility and program visibility. The Department's existing strategic goals expire in December 2021 as evidenced in document B6. Once or twice a year, information is collected at the Department level that includes faculty yearly reports, evaluation of infrastructure, course descriptions and assessment, faculty publications and awards, research grants, student course evaluations and so forth. This information, is, according to the Department's Quality Assurance Proposal, integrated in committee reports, deliberated in open assemblies with the participation of students, discussed and analysed in faculty meetings, checked against updated or new legislation, and contextualized in the bibliography in the field. The information from these processes then becomes part of the Department's internal evaluation report submitted to MODIP. With MODIP's feedback, the Department, then, works on planning based on particular strategic goals. Proposals are presented and deliberated in the Department's standing committees and at the Department's General Assembly. In the direction of improving the quality of teaching, learning and research, the Department strives to offer:

- **High Quality educational experiences:** It designs, develops and implements curricula through a transparent and inclusive process, that engenders and promotes quality and meets scientific and educational demands; exploring pedagogical approaches and teaching strategies that best meet the needs of the students; fostering student-centered learning. These are evidenced in the overall sound nature of courses and instructor evaluations, increased course evaluation participation, high student GPAs and success rate per course.
- **Effective Teaching:** It recruits highly qualified faculty and evaluates their work yearly; reviewing annual faculty reports; monitoring and supporting student progress; providing student support and make appropriate resources available; encouraging collaborations with students and participation in mobility programs.
- **Quality Faculty Research:** It supports and encourages the production of research outputs by members of the Department that meet high academic standards; encourages and supports faculty mobility and attending scholarly activities such as conferences, research networks and grant projects.
- **Cooperation and outreach:** It facilitates the connection between teaching and research and the development of initiatives that disseminate research findings at all levels of public-school education; also school and community outreach. It also organizes a variety of international conferences and Summer Schools.
- **Effective evaluation processes:** It engages in ongoing evaluation and the upgrading of its offerings to students by revisiting the Quality Assurance systems in place, thereby ensuring a fruitful collaboration between the Department's OMEA and the University's MODIP.

Overall, the EEAP finds the quality assurance processes of the Department very satisfactory and responsive to the main recommendations of the 2013 External Evaluation report.

Based on the various and extensive evaluation documentation presented, the EEAP notes that the Department has addressed, to the degree that is possible, most of the recommendations identified during the 2013 External Evaluation. More specifically, the Department has: (i) revised the curriculum to create a better balance between required and elective courses, (ii) addressed curricular needs for an introductory course in General Teaching and Learning Theories, and (iii) continues offering courses in critical fields such as gender identities and forms of family organization in contemporary societies. The recommendations of the 2013 evaluation report suggested the Department develops a strategic plan, particularly given its tight budget, in order to sharpen the allocation of limited resources and to recalibrate the breadth and depth of its offerings. The Department's Quality Policy stands in lieu of an official strategic plan. The 2013 External Review Committee itself recognized the formidable challenge associated with this recommendation in a context of severe budgetary cuts and of the inter-dependence of any such strategic plan at the Departmental level to the University's strategic plan and the existing legal framework.

Panel Judgement

Principle 1: Academic Unit Policy for Quality Assurance	
Fully compliant	√
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

None.

Principle 2: Design and Approval of Programs

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

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

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

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

Study Program Compliance

The Primary Education Undergraduate Program of study focuses on pedagogical, psychological, sociological and philosophical theories and the ways they shape educational practice, building skills and competences needed in the 21st century school. Students attend classes at the University and conduct their fieldwork and student teaching experiences for a total of eight semesters, that include 59 courses: twenty-three (23) are *required*, twenty-five (25) are *electives*, and four (4) address Foreign Language, Digital Literacy, Writing Academic Papers and Qualitative-Quantitative Analysis, respectively. These courses, along with the required Practicum that is built in seven (7) courses comprise the 240 ECTS that lead to the diploma (undergraduate degree). According to the Departments Accreditation Proposal, curricula are revised with the participation of faculty, EEP and EDIP members, as well as students (via their participation in the Department's General Assembly and through data from student evaluations) and taking into consideration yearly Departmental evaluations and self-evaluations in line with HAHE's quality indicators. At the same time, the Department draws on the established relationships and partnerships with employers (school principals mostly, as well as other social partners) and feedback received during students' Practica, discussions with Practicum university supervisors, and so forth. From our discussions with alumni and social partners, it seems that

the program’s graduates are well sought after by employers and the program has a good reputation in the schooling community.

The program of study has undergone different revisions since 2013 with the more recent one taking place in 2019-2020. It was reported that curricular changes are based on developments in the field, as well as on broader educational, socioeconomic and cultural conditions and needs, and they are always aligned with an organized process that adheres to quality standards. The documentation provided indicated that the main curricular updates have taken shape along the following axes: more emphasis on the student-centered character of the program of study, strengthening the connection between educational theory and practice, a more efficient course sequence that builds on new introductory and foundational courses in the first two years, and gradually transitions students into deepened pedagogical understanding and areas of expertise in classroom and other educational contexts, and further connecting teaching with research. The revisions of the program of study are in accordance with the recommendations of the 2013 external review. More specifically, two required courses covering teaching and instruction theories have been added to meet the need for an introductory course in General Didactics; The Practicum has been extended and spread out as different field experiences throughout the four years of study; The ECTS ratio between required and elective courses has changed from 2:1 to 1:1,4 giving students the opportunity to go into greater depth in certain subject matters/fields of study, based on their own interests; more courses with a research component have been added, as well as courses in critical fields.

Overall, the program of study builds on a sound progression from more foundational/theoretical courses to more specialized, practice-based ones, offering students a rich and rigorous learning experience. Students are putting their knowledge and competences to work through diversified field experiences that extended throughout their four years of study. It was reported that Practica are conducted in student-teacher teams fostering collaborative learning, as well as building a community of pre-service educators.

Panel Judgement

Principle 2: Design and Approval of Programs	
Fully compliant	√
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- Given the reported work overload on faculty and the need to deliver a very broad and demanding curriculum, it would be worth revisiting some curricular choices in a more creative way to alleviate faculty burnout. In this direction, it would be worth reviewing the list of required courses and establish a clear rationale behind every choice.

- The EEAP is not clear as to the degree to which students participate in the decision-making of the school, either in the General Assembly or in any of its other committees and decision-making bodies. It would be useful for the Department to define meaningful student participation and the degree to which students can contribute to the co-design and review of the program of study.

Principle 3: Student- centered Learning, Teaching and Assessment

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

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

The student-centered learning and teaching process

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

In addition :

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

Study Program Compliance

The Department of Primary Education is organized into four Divisions which point to its direction and areas of emphasis: social and cultural studies, science and new technologies, pedagogy of social exclusion and minority education. Three research centers are focused on, reading and writing, pedagogical research and praxis, digital analysis and design of learning tools. These align well with the four Divisions and position the Department to have strong relevance into the future. The Department places unique emphasis on two critical underpinning issues in the preparation of students - diversity and technology – and in this regard it is preparing learners for a complex world where these two elements are both ubiquitous and impactful on individuals and society in in their employment and private lives.

The Department states in its Quality Policy its commitment to the implementation of ‘its *raison d’ être*’ and the realization of its strategic goals, as well as supports the academic nature and orientation of its Curriculum, through a process that is clearly targeted as continuous improvement.’ In the documentation provided and the feedback from administrators, faculty staff and students, it was claimed that the program of the Department adheres to the principles of student-centered pedagogy and curriculum. Its revised degree with its large set of elective offerings, the extension of the practicum and its ongoing commitment to serving minority students, among other changes, is posited as evidence of its willingness and capacity to meet these principles.

The evolving goal of student-centered learning, teaching and assessment is integral to the school’s culture and professed by all who reported to the evaluation panel. This notion involves the design and delivery of programs that are not based on the transmission of authoritative content but on the needs of the students in their diversity, engaging them actively in the processes of knowledge creation and its evaluation. Further changes and increased resources will need to be considered in order to fully achieve this quality objective.

The documentation provided suggests that the delivery of the core curriculum remains largely in lecture format, hence the expressed desire for larger lecture theatres that will accommodate all students. It is augmented and supported by tutorials, seminars, laboratories and practicums. The Department of Primary Education however has a longstanding reputation for advocating student-centered approaches to its practices. The faculty and staff reported that their commitment to the wellbeing and progress of learners was pre-eminent. The faculty/student ratio (reported as 1:77 of all students enrolled and 1:51 for students enrolled in regular semesters) however, strains this commitment and puts many constraints on its realization. Nonetheless the students, both undergraduate and graduate, who were selected to engage with the evaluation panel spoke unanimously with pride about the positive experiences they had as students and their strong interpersonal relationships with faculty and staff. They said they had a voice in the school and expressed a strong sense of community. The stakeholders also spoke favourably of the relationships with the Department, its administrators, faculty and students and its strong presence in the local community. Informants spoke to a tradition of relying on interpersonal relations and go beyond the call of duty to meet student needs. This was presented as evidence of impact in realizing student-centered goals. However, this needs to be coupled with more systematic arrangements for engagement and expanded faculty and student involvement in decision making. Evidence of the student-centered approach was offered as the capacity of students to select courses and design their own pathway of study. Of the 59 courses required to graduate, only 25 were compulsory, the rest were available as choices that the students could make depending on their interests.

The documentation reviewed indicates that assessment processes of the school followed traditional five-point summative assessment scale models (Excellent to Fail) based on written tasks plus proficiency in a language. Faculty and staff interviewed indicated that continuous formative evaluation was becoming increasingly part of their assessment and evaluation processes. It was also reported that students participated in course evaluations at the end of every semester for every course they are enrolled, however the student participation remains relatively low (36,4 in AY 20-21) but up from AY 2018-2019 (31,9).

The faculty and instructors selected to engage with the evaluation panel claimed that their process for the design, delivery, and examination of all programs was rigorous and complied fully with University expectations and the Department’s quality principles. The documentation presented to support this claim was detailed. The Department has embraced the concept of

inclusive education and the notion of an inclusive curriculum, designed to facilitate knowledge and understanding of all learners, including special needs learners. This orientation permeates all the core curriculum courses. It was reported, in addition, that there are specific resources associated with students who are deaf, blind or whose native tongue is Turkish. Noted in particular was the large number of courses dealing with culture, diversity and differential instruction.

The documentation presented and the testimony of those who reported to the evaluation panel demonstrated that all information that students required is available to them through digital and written materials. The administrative team spoke of the benefits of technology in enabling them to undertake all their tasks and to be responsive to student needs across all the educational processes.

Panel Judgement

Principle 3: Student- centered Learning, Teaching and Assessment	
Fully compliant	√
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- The EEAP encourages the Department to explore further ways in which the affordances of learning technologies can enable more student-centered approaches to teaching and learning and assessment.
- To the degree possible, expand the practice of team teaching, face to face and online in order to engage learners more effectively as knowledge creators.

Principle 4: Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification

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

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

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

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

Study Program Compliance

The mission of the Department of Primary Education is to prepare educators who possess a strong theoretical understanding, knowledge of instructional practices, intellectual autonomy and professional accountability. Emphasis is placed on shaping educators with “democratic consciousness, who are opposed to any racist or sexist rationale and any kind of social discrimination.” In line with other Higher Education Institutions in Greece, the Department is governed by the standard regulations related to student admission and certification.

In regard to admission standards and procedures, the majority of the students are offered admission based on their performance on the National Entrance Examination. It is important to note that the Department requests 150 students every year from the Ministry of Education and ends up with a class of 300 plus students. Alternative routes of admission requirements also exist for foreign, expatriate, transfer, athletes, and special needs students. These requirements are explicitly outlined and enforced. New incoming students are supported from the beginning of their studies through an informative welcome orientation session offered by the Department with the participation of the Department Head and faculty members and staff, where the organization and operation of the Department and its support services, the Curriculum, course of study and Practicum, and infrastructure are presented in detail. First-year students are further onboarded through two required courses offered in their very first semester: Digital Literacy and Research Methods and they are furnished with a [Survival Guide](#) that helps them navigate life at Aristotle University. Furthermore, the Department monitors student progress through the six academic advisors assigned every year.

For students who face obstacles integrating in the Department's academic life, there is substantial support from the Centre of Inclusive Policy that caters to students with disabilities, and chronic illness, as well as students facing social exclusion and/or discrimination. The EEAP would like to commend the Department for its inclusive policy efforts.

The program of study consists of required courses, electives, capstones, and Practica, and includes a well-established international Erasmus+ program, which offers opportunities to students and staff through the various mobility programs with 19 active bilateral agreements. Upon graduation, students are expected to demonstrate the skills and dispositions to foster learning in schools or in other educational organizations.

The Department has been offering the Diploma Supplement since 2010 and aspires to issue any AUTH-related documentation in English as soon as legal barriers are lifted.

Based on data provided and discussions with current students and graduates of the Department, it was concluded that students are making satisfactory progress in the program. The average graduation is around four years. Current students commented on the support and guidance that they received from the faculty throughout their program, suggesting that faculty is a strength of the program. Example statements included “faculty are well qualified to teach their courses”, “faculty awareness of new developments in the field”, “faculty interest in the professional development of students” and “overall quality of instruction.” Similarly, graduates also reported that they were intellectually challenged and stimulated in the program and appeared to appreciate their faculty.

Overall, there is definitely a sense of belongingness and camaraderie in the program. We applaud the Department for cultivating a positive learning environment for students to acquire knowledge and develop their skills and confidence, which consequently ensures a timely graduation.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The Department should consider conducting systematic surveys (e.g., exit, alumni and advising surveys) on student satisfaction, retention, and successful career paths for continuous improvement.

Principle 5: Teaching Staff

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

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

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

Study Program Compliance

The Department comprises twenty-seven (27) faculty members (DEP), two EEP members, four EDIP members and two ETEP members. These faculty members bring diverse expertise and research interests to the undergraduate Program and its curriculum. There is also a fair balance in the academic ranking ratio between female and male professors. Over the last three years, three faculty lines were lost to retirements while only one was given back to the Department. Finally, it is important to note that in order to meet the Department's curricular and administrative needs at the undergraduate and graduate level, faculty constantly carry a teaching overload.

The Department follows the current legislation on the recruitment and promotion processes of faculty members. Specifically, all procedures of announcement, selection, promotion, and recruitment are posted on the information system APELLA. The details of these processes are accessible to candidates and members of the evaluation committee, ensuring transparency and securing a meritocratic result.

The faculty continue to develop academically, and a significant number of faculty members publish their research work in international scientific refereed journals. A significant number of monographs and edited volumes have been published during the last five years. Moreover, faculty members organized and participated in national and international conferences bringing more visibility to the Department and their research work. However, while faculty are encouraged to participate in international conferences, there is a lack of adequate financial support for their participation. Additional funds need to be allocated for this purpose.

The Department encourages the mobility of faculty members by establishing agreements with domestic and foreign institutions for research and teaching purposes. The EEAP believes that

the Department should consider alternative ways to increase the faculty's international scientific collaborations and research activity.

The staff have excellent relations with one another and have established strong collaborations amongst them. Nevertheless, working conditions are not ideal due to the lack of financial resources and especially due to the high workload. Faculty members spend (on an average) more than 8 hours per week on teaching and 10 hours per week on administrative duties. Since a significant percentage of their time is spent on conducting research, the EEAP encourages the Department to identify ways to reduce the teaching and administrative load of faculty members.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The EEAP understands that the Department is already involved in offering training in pedagogy to faculty. In collaboration and with the support of the Rector, the Department is ideally positioned to share expertise and could work towards creating and providing leadership to a professional development centre at the University level for faculty development and professional growth. Faculty members of this Department have the skills and expertise and should be offered the opportunity to run this centre and provide professional development opportunities on new pedagogical trends to colleagues from other departments in order to help them find ways to strengthen faculty-student engagement and improve their teaching and assessment practices.
- The Department should consider identifying and keeping track of administrative work that could be carried out by the administrative staff to alleviate faculty overload and to free time for faculty members to engage in scholarship.

Principle 6: Learning Resources and Student Support

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

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

When allocating the available resources, the needs of all students must be taken into consideration (e.g. whether they are full-time or part-time students, employed or international students, students with disabilities) and the shift towards student-centered learning and the adoption of flexible modes of learning and teaching. Support activities and facilities may be organized in various ways, depending on the institutional context. However, the internal quality assurance ensures that all resources are appropriate, adequate, and accessible, and that students are informed about the services available to them.

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

Study Program Compliance

The students at the Department of Primary Education reported that they had access to excellent learning materials and were much supported by the Department and the University. The main challenge remained the shortage of supervisors for the practicum experience. The documentation provided outlined the extensive processes by which students access information about their programs and associated activities and that was disseminated to students and other stakeholders.

The video presentation and the testimony of those who presented to the panel demonstrated that the facilities available were well maintained and offered a range of educational settings and administrative spaces for students and faculty. In addition, it was reported that the library was a very valuable asset to all given its extensive holdings. It was not clear if its holdings are being digitized at the rate required for eLearning and remote access. Faculty reported on maintenance issues for the roof of the Teaching Academy (Didaskaleio) that have been pending for a while and seem to have made this space unusable.

The University and the Department offer a range of services to students including well maintained accommodation, a number of clubs, student health services and services for people with disability, the gymnasium and a day-care centre, and a Career Services office that assisted learners and graduates with their transition to employment. The Career Office provided a number of scholarships and offered languages for special purposes.

Students are further supported in their timely progression through the program of study with the help of six academic advisors assigned every year. These six advisors facilitate first-year

students' transition from high school to higher education, providing help with choosing courses and further support students to successfully meet program requirements.

The research centers and laboratories of the Department all seem to have adequate facilities, however there was very little seed funding to support the pursuit of grants and publications. The Centre for Inclusive Policy demonstrates the Department's commitment to ensuring inclusion of students who encounter obstacles that concern their university education.

The administrators of the Department reported that their workload had improved as a consequence of the use of more electronic tools to support all members of the Department with relevant information and reports related to grades, promotions and other such Departmental activities. It was reported that, even during the period of the pandemic, the six staff could continue undertaking up to 90% of their responsibilities electronically which, they claimed, was more efficient and less expensive than the paper culture before the digital transformation made tasks flow easier therefore reducing their need to increase staff numbers.

Students reported that despite the hardships of the COVID period, they valued digital connections with staff, faculty and administrators, easy access to information and the opportunity to continue their studies, even some aspects of the practicum, via digital means.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The Career Centre could take on an expanded role to tracking graduate destinations and establish an alumni network.

Principle 7: Information Management

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

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

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

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

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

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

Study Program Compliance

The Department of Primary Education of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH) aims to provide students with theoretical knowledge, research and critical thinking skills, and practical training in Primary education, in accordance with the European and the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education. The EEAP has determined that the Department has established a multidimensional process about its information management that informs internal evaluation as well as external evaluation and accreditation processes. Core in this process is the role of OMEA, the internal evaluation committee made up of faculty members from diverse disciplinary fields within the department. The internal evaluation group (OMEA), based on the system of quality management of MODIP, collects data through surveys, quantitative and qualitative information from faculty and lab directors regarding the content and instruction mode, research and teaching activities, and community outreach activities. Another source of data collection is based on internal department procedures like accountability reports from different committees and units of the Department, of open assemblies - discussions between students and teaching staff, of discussions with student representatives and requests of the student association (Syllogos Foititon). It is also based on requests from the educational staff and on literature related to studies in schools of education or to the graduates of pedagogical departments. Finally, it is also based on the existing legislation and any amendments or changes relating to educational studies or to vocational rights of graduates. Information collected via all

these avenues is used to revise the curriculum, implement novel teaching methods, improve infrastructure and department facilities, facilitate the use of ICTs, the organization of conferences, workshops, invited lectures and so forth.

On the other hand, a **multidimensional process** has also been adopted on the ways and modes of disseminating information:

- The Department's Student Guide: Written and/or updated annually in Greek and English
- The Departments' [website](#) which has been completely redesigned and updated in spring 2020, and has since been updated on a daily and/or weekly basis and contains substantive information on the studies, human resources and activities of the Department
- The websites of the three institutionalized laboratories of the Department that provide information on the identity, purposes, personnel, activities and academic collaborations
- The Greek Digital Earth Centre of Excellence for Geographic Education, built in 2018, which is pioneering not only for Greece but also for many other European countries
- A variety of other online resources of academic or institutional nature, such as APELLA, Eudoxos, the [e-course platform](#) and MODIP – AUTH.

It was reported that internal evaluations take place regularly and students are asked to provide feedback on their courses and teaching staff every semester. The EEAP had access to course evaluations tabulations and examined sample questionnaires used for course evaluations. Specifically, information is collected and examined on a variety of quality indicators, including the following: follow-up of the course; workload in relation to the study; transparency in grading criteria; faculty guidance and openness; teaching ability and faculty consistency. Further, this information is directly shared with the information system of MODIP.

The Department's website presents the management of data for students, teachers and courses offered. It contains general information such as structure and organization of the program, course statistics, course syllabi, and statistics on graduates from each academic year. Through this platform, students have access to their grades, both for courses they are currently taking, as well as from past semesters. The students, respectively, can confirm their enrolments and monitor their progression in the Program.

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

The Alumni who participated in the review with the members of EEAP, expressed with enthusiasm a strong connection with the Department and noted that they felt welcomed to participate in educational opportunities (e.g. events, symposia, conferences, seminars, co-authored papers, PhD programs). They also expressed their enthusiasm for their training in a theoretical, practical and research direction, as well as their study at Universities abroad under the ERASMUS program. During the academic year 2019-2020 the Department had 16 active agreements with Universities abroad for students study in the ERASMUS+ program and 4 active agreements with universities abroad for traineeships of students. Fifty-two (52) courses are offered in the undergraduate program of the Department for incoming students, two of which are designed specifically for ERASMUS students and are taught in English. According to data

presented to the EEAP, from the academic year 2010-2011 to 2020-2021 there were 41 incoming students and 210 outgoing.

It was found that some graduates continue their careers in Universities abroad as researchers or as postgraduate students, while others work as teachers in public or private schools outside Greece. This was regarded by all interviewed as important since it increased the bond and sense of community among students, as well as faculty and graduates with the potential for future collaborations, teaching opportunities and availability of practical experiences. In 1991, the Association of Graduates of the Department of Primary Education was founded under the name "Miltos Koundouras", who was Director of the females "Didaskaleio" in Thessaloniki and applied in Greece the principles of the Laboratory School. The Association played an important role in the professional placement of its members and developed great educational and cultural activity but has been inactive in recent years since it really depends on the initiative of alumni.

The Department does not seem to be presently collecting data on student employability and the career paths of graduates. This would be helpful data regarding the Department's ability to position its graduates, and foster future connections and collaborations.

Overall, the EEAP believes that the frequency of satisfaction surveys and the decisions being made following the analysis of these data is sufficient.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The Department of Primary Education should consider establishing methods for collecting information related to their graduates' job placements and academic careers.
- It would be useful for the Department to develop an Alumni Network that can serve a dual purpose: keep graduates informed about the Department's events, workshops and activities; and maintain contact in order to collect targeted alumni information through surveys, questionnaires, etc.

Principle 8: Public Information

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

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

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

Study Program Compliance

It was found that the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH) and the Department of Primary Education have put in place a comprehensive public information system as we deduced through our interviews with the Head of the Department, members of MODIP, OMEA, faculty, administrative staff and students. The EEAP examined materials provided that exhibited evidence of critical information sharing with students, faculty members, external partners and the community at large. The fully up-to-date Department's website in Greek and English language contains rich and useful information for prospective and current students, graduates, other stakeholders and the public. In particular, it contains information about its facilities, staff, undergraduate and graduate programs and student guides, announcements, events, policy of quality assurance, and internal assessment reports; Information about the library of the Department and the secretary office for the administrative support for the students' studies. Information about the electronic secretariat system (sis.auth.gr, myAuth) for the platform of electronic management of the courses and for access to educational material and Practica and about the Centre for Inclusive Policy for the education and the support for students from vulnerable groups. It further contains information about electronic governance (software, institutional accounts, etc.), the [online service](#) and the digitized [course schedule](#) service.

Notices about the annual reception for prospective students, about awards, as well as the activities of members of the academic community (conferences, workshops, announcements, distinctions, trainings) are also posted on the Department's website. Information of interest to the general public such as invited lectures, workshops, conferences and other events that connect the Department with society is posted on the website of the Department and published in the press.

The content of the webpage is constantly updated including all recent decisions and announcements concerning, for example, information on the registration process and the acquisition of an institutional account, explanations for the Undergraduate Curriculum etc.

During the meeting of the EEAP with graduates of the Department, they were all very enthusiastic about the important role the Department has played in their career and noted that they continue to have close relations with their professors, and they receive information through social media or the electronic and printed press for conferences, workshops and cultural events of the Department and they have participated in some of them. Nevertheless, the EEAP believes that it would be useful to improve the e-publishing activity of the Department by creating an e-Newsletter and posting testimonials and short, engaging videos about their achievements. In this way, the thousands of students and alumni of the Department, the

numerous collaborators and school partners, social partners and the community in general could have more direct information about important educational, research and other cultural activities of the Department.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The EEAP encourages the Department to consider creating an e-Newsletter as a way to maintain contact with students, alumni, schools, social partners and other stakeholders
- The EEAP would like to suggest that the Department upgrades and further develops the English version of their website, in order to build a stronger public profile and showcase the outstanding achievements of the school as well as the work and careers of students and alumni.

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

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

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

The above comprise the evaluation of:

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

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

Study Program Compliance

The Department has adopted a strategic direction based on the external evaluation report on 2013 and produced a Strategic Plan for continuous improvement. Moreover, the Department is regularly reviewed and revised with the participation of students and faculty members. The information collected is analysed and the program is modified according to the new data.

The secretary of MODIP sets the evaluation schedule at the beginning of each academic year and the President of the Department, in collaboration with the coordinator of OMEA, assigns to members of OMEA the preparation of the Department's evaluation report. Once drafted, it is submitted to the Department Head at the end of the academic year. The Assembly of the Department is informed of the results. These are discussed and items for improvement are identified and agreed upon.

The EEAP can see that student course evaluation is an important part of the quality monitoring procedure. The educational process is evaluated through questionnaires completed each academic semester and for each course. However, there appears to be relatively low student response rates to the various course evaluations. The EEAP recognizes that this is a problem affecting universities worldwide. Nonetheless, the Department may try to address the low course-evaluation completion by proposing innovative strategies of their choosing (e.g., incentives, completion during class time, etc). The EEAP encourages the Department to compare student evaluation results over time when they have a more sizeable sample. Student questionnaires provide significant data that can contribute to the improvement of the offered courses.

It is finally important to note that the Quality Assurance efforts, along with the quality of the department's scholarly community, have seemingly helped ensure exemplary pedagogy and practical experiences of the students and their overall welfare at the university of Thessaloniki.

EEAP interviews with the faculty, students, alumni, and external stakeholders evidenced a very high level of satisfaction with the program as implemented. The faculty must be given credit for providing creative pedagogy and instilling critical thinking and democratic, global, and socially just values.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The EEAP encourages the department to obtain feedback more formally from external stakeholders (e.g., alumni, employers, social agency directors) by operating an “alumni-external partners” committee.
- The Department could explore ways of including members of excluded/marginalized communities more systematically as stakeholders.

Principle 10: Regular External Evaluation of Undergraduate Programs

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

HAHE is responsible for administrating the Program accreditation process which is realized as an external evaluation procedure, and implemented by a committee of independent experts. HAHE grants accreditation of Programs, with a specific term of validity, following to which revision is required. The accreditation of the quality of the Programs acts as a means of verification of the compliance of the Program with the template's requirements, and as a catalyst for improvement, while opening new perspectives towards the international standing of the awarded degrees.

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

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

Study Program Compliance

Institutions of higher learning in Greece achieve compliance by demonstrating that they meet the Quality Assurance principles and those established by HAHE. The committee reviewed all available documents (e.g., accreditation proposal, program of study, quality indicators and other supporting documentation), the website, and conducted extensive online interviews with key members of the university community such as the Vice-Rector for Academic and Student Affairs, the Head of the Department, members of the OMEA and MODIP, faculty, administrative and laboratory staff, students, graduates and external partners and employers.

The program continues to nurture an inclusive environment within the university community that respects and supports people of diverse characteristics and backgrounds (e.g., minorities, individuals with special needs and/or chronic illness, etc.). The pursuit of their strategic direction and Quality Plan is strengthened through the application of findings from various assessments of the procedures and policies that support the accomplishment of these goals in the program.

Specifically, based on the prior external evaluation recommendations, the Department uses a range of quantitative and qualitative methods to understand the experiences and learning outcomes of its undergraduate students. Some of these measures include rates of progression, retention (e.g., particularly for struggling students), transfer, and graduation rates. In addition, the program offers required, elective and practicum courses with sufficient availability to provide students with the opportunity to graduate within the allotted program length. The information published by the program on its website is sufficient to enable students to make informed decisions about their educational journey. Requirements for the degree program are based upon clear and articulated learning objectives, including a mastery of the learning theories and their practical application pertinent to teaching in elementary school settings. Through the program of study, graduates clearly demonstrate an in-depth understanding of the teaching-learning process (e.g., most of the graduates appear to be successfully employed or

pursuing graduate degrees in Greece and abroad). Technology has become a pertinent vehicle in delivering instruction, communicating with students, and administering services.

Overall, past recommendations and findings by the evaluation committee were addressed and integrated into their strategic direction and Quality Plan, in accordance with the University, Quality Assurance directives to inform program planning and resource allocation.

Panel Judgement

Principle 10: Regular External Evaluation of Undergraduate Programs	
Fully compliant	√
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

Beyond the regular external evaluation process, the Department could consider tapping on external experts they have come to know and work with, and who can serve as “critical friends” and also consider exploring scenario planning in order to investigate the ways in which emerging social, economic, technological and environment factors, for example, might impact on their program, goals and student’s trajectories.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

- The social commitment of the Department to prepare democratic educators who understand the complexity of contemporary educational phenomena and are ready to apply their knowledge and skills in educational contexts in the direction of transforming society through the principles of equity, justice, freedom and equality.
- Faculty's commitment to providing quality education despite the excessive workload.
- The Department's adequate and prompt responses to the recommendations of the 2013 External Evaluation.
- The inclusive policy approach the Department has adopted that has infused the curriculum and all aspects of academic life.
- The high degree of satisfaction, support and enthusiasm for the Department among students, alumni, and external partners and stakeholders, serves as a testament to the Department's reputation and effectiveness.
- The choice of the department to offer tuition-free graduate studies that shows a commitment to free and public education for all.

II. Areas of Weakness

- The very high faculty/student ratio has been well-documented and is affecting all areas of Department life.
- Faculty work overload that, while needed for the functioning of the department and the delivery of the curriculum, at the same time impedes undertaking new initiatives at the department level and/or affects faculty's scholarship engagement.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- Since the retirement of high-profile faculty associated with the Division of Minority Education, it cannot fulfil its goals without the recruitment of new dedicated educators. There is an urgent need to address this gap, given that one of the pillars of the school's mission and values is that it serves minority students and their needs. We urge the University to prioritize staffing this Division, as it serves a strategic mission. In addition to providing new lines for the Division, the Department should consider moving some existing faculty with relevant expertise in the field from other divisions (i.e. Division of Pedagogy and Social Exclusion) to the Division of Minority Education to further support and strengthen it.
- Given the work overload on faculty and the need to deliver a very demanding curriculum, the Department should approach the curriculum creatively and possibly review the list of required courses in order to establish a clear rationale behind every choice.
- The EEAP is not clear as to the degree to which students participate in the decision-making of the school on many different levels. It would be useful for the Department to consider ways of re-engaging with students and negotiating the benefits of their active representation in the decision-making bodies of the school – the General Assembly and a range of committees.
- The EEAP encourages the Department to systematize and formalize processes of collecting different types of useful information and data. This includes conducting systematic surveys

(e.g., exit, alumni and advising surveys) on student satisfaction, retention, and successful career paths with the aim of continuous improvement. The Career Centre could potentially be involved in this latter endeavour.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

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

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

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

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

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

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname

Signature

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- 2. Prof. Athanasios Gagatsis**
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