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HELLENIC REPUBLIC

H Q A

HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE
AND ACCREDITATION AGENCY

Accreditation Report for the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS)

Institution Name: National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

Date: 30/10/2018

ΑΡΙΣΤΕΙΔΟΥ 1 & ΕΥΡΥΠΙΛΟΥ, 105 59 ΑΘΗΝΑ
Τηλ.: +30 210 9220944, FAX: +30 210 9220143
Ηλ. Ταχ.: adipsecretariat@hqa.gr Ιστότοπος: <http://www.hqa.gr>

1, ARISTIDOU ST., 105 59 ATHENS, GREECE
Tel.: +30 210 9220944, Fax: +30 210 9220143
Email: adipsecretariat@hqa.gr Website: www.hqa.gr



Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση
Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινωνικό Ταμείο

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



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION
FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE
IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Report of the Panel appointed by the HQA to undertake the review of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) of the **National and Kapodistrian University of Athens** for the purposes of granting accreditation.

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PART A: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW

I. The Accreditation Panel

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) of the Higher Education Institution named: National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA) comprised the following five members, drawn from the HQA Register, in accordance with the Law 4009/2011:

1. Professor Dedousis Evangelos (Chair) - *The American University in Dubai*
2. Dr Kazantzis Demetrios - *Food and Beverage Consultants*
3. Dr Kopsidas Konstantinos - *The University of Manchester*
4. Professor Nakos George - *Clayton State University*
5. Professor Violaris Ioannis - *City Unity College Cyprus*

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

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

In the morning of 15 October 2018, the External Accreditation Panel (the Panel) was briefed on HQA's (ΑΔΙΠ) mission, the national framework of HEIs, and standards and guidelines of QA accreditation process by Professor Nikoletta Paisidou, President HQA, Dr Christina Besta, General Director HQA, and several administrative members of HQA. Following the briefing that took place in the premises of HQA, the Panel members arrived at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA) at 13:10 where they were welcomed by Kostas Buraselis, Professor Emeritus and Advisor of the Rectorate, Mr. Konstantinos Bourletidis, Secretary of MODIP, and Ms. Sofia Krousaniotaki, Administrative support of MODIP. An overview of NKUA's history, academic profile, strengths, and current state was presented during the introductory meeting.

At 15:45 the Panel members discussed the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS), quality targets, and strategies and goals of NKUA in the context of budgetary constraints with Professor Nikolaos Milonas, Vice Rector of Finance, Professor Thomas Sfikopoulos, Vice Rector of Research and Development, and Professor Emeritus Kostas Buraselis. At 17:40 there was a further meeting with Professor Napoleon Maravegias, Vice Rector of Administrative Affairs, Professor Emeritus Kostas Buraselis, and Mr. Konstantinos Bourletidis to discuss the strategic orientation, research, quality assurance goals and mechanisms to maintain and improve quality standards. The Panel returned to the hotel at 19:40 to reflect on the information collected and prepare for the second day of visit to NKUA.

On 16 October 2018, the Panel met with stakeholders and bodies associated with NKUA. Thus, at 09:25 the Panel met with MSc and PhD students Mr. Koskovolis, Ms. Kontou, Mr. Fischer, Mr. Fakas, Mr. Mitropoulos, Mr. Foutzoulis, Ms. Bettinelli, Ms. Spiliopoulou to discuss their views on

a range of issues including progression of study, learning, input in quality control and decision making, grants, adequacy of facilities and equipment, and career development. A meeting with Professor Dimopoulos, Rector of NKUA, focusing on the context of tertiary education in Greece, as well as the prospects and challenges for NKUA took place at 10:30. Then, at 10:55, undergraduate students Ms. Michelatou, Ms. Zampoura, Ms. Anastasopoulou, Mr. Raptis, Mr. Pinos, presented to the Panel their views and experiences on the learning process, student life and welfare, strengths and weaknesses of programs of study, as well as input in quality control.

At 11:25, the Panel met with Faculty members and IEG/OMEA representatives, Professor Ioannis Emmanouil, Dean School of Science, Professor Kalliopi Christakakou-Fotiadi, Dean School of Law, Professor Nikolaos Iriotis, Head of Department of Economics, Professor Anastasia Papadia-Lala, Head IEG Department of History and Archaeology, Professor Asimina Antonarakou, Head of IEG Department of Geology and Geoenvironment, Associate Professor Ioannis Giossos, IEG representative department of Physical education and Sport Science, Associate Professor Ioannis Tsougkakos, IEG representative Department of Biology, Associate Professor Ourania Tsitsiloni, IEG representative, Department of Biology to discuss the internal evaluation processes and the relationship between IEG/OMEA and MODIP.

At 12:35 the meeting with chief administrative officers, Mrs. Efstathia Kafentzi, Secretary Special Account for Research Grants, Mrs. Vasiliki Dimakopoulou, Deputy Secretary Special Account for Research Grants, Mrs. Varvara Moraiti, Head of Procurement Department, Dr Spyros Bolis, Head of Network Operations Center, Mrs. Foteini Fryda, Senior Clerk Public Relations & History Directorate, Mrs. Sotiria–Alexandra Sakellariou, Director Public Relations & History Directorate, Mr. Dimitrios Koutsobolis, Head of Press Office, Mrs. Anna Kypriadou, Director Education & Research Directorate focused on NKUA’s quality assurance documentation and issues related to the internal evaluation processes.

At 14:00 alumni (graduates) Mr. Sotiris Drikos, Ms. Evangelia Marouli, Mr. Evangelos Charitonidis, Ms. Foteini Angelou, Ms. Vasiliki Alexoudi shared with the Panel their experiences of study at NKUA, career paths, and present relationship with the NKUA. Following this meeting the Panel met with external stakeholders from the private and public sector, Mr. Theodoros Tryfon, Mr. Spiridon Kiritsis, Mr. Pantelis Tentes, Mr. Lefteris Papagiannakis at 15:05. The Panel’s final meeting at NKUA took place at 16:35 and was attended by Professor Napoleon Maravegias, Professor Emeritus Kostas Buraselis, Mr. Konstantinos Bourletidis, Ms. Sofia Krousaniotaki. Issues of the strategic direction of NKUA and quality assurance were the focus of discussion during the final meeting. The Panel left NKUA for the hotel at 17:20 to prepare the accreditation report of the Institution based on the guidelines provided by the HQA.

III. Institution Profile

Please provide a brief overview of the Institution, with reference to the following: history, academic remit, student population, campus, orientation challenges or any other key background information.

A public, self-governed legal entity the National and Kapodistrian University (NKUA), originally established in 1837 as “Othonian University”, took its present name in 1932. NKUA is the oldest

institution of higher education in modern Greece and the first university in the Balkan and East Mediterranean region. A learner-focused and research-oriented institution NKUA has grown from four schools, in its early years of operation, to 33 departments in sciences and social sciences housed in 8 schools. There are also 76 departments in the School of Health Sciences.

According to published data there are approximately 39.000 undergraduate and close to 26.000 post-graduate students enrolled in about 170 Bachelor's and post-graduate programs of study. However, the numbers for active undergraduate and post-graduate students are much lower.

Approximately 3.200 people are employed at NKUA. This number includes about 2.100 professors of all ranks and other teaching staff as well as close to 1.100 administrative staff.

NKUA offers several international joint postgraduate programs, has cooperation agreements with several European universities promoting student mobility and participates in the Erasmus Pan-European program. There are about 2500 active international students of whom 700 study under the Erasmus exchange program.

The Schools and the Departments are located in several facilities in central Athens and the suburbs. The total surface area of the buildings owned by NKUA is 700.000m². Reducing operating costs is a major strategic goal for NKUA and, to this end, some of the schools and departments are relocated to NKUA-owned buildings.

A substantial decrease in government funding over the past few years in conjunction with the hiring freeze that does not allow for retiring faculty members and administrative staff to be replaced, while student numbers keep increasing, has impacted the operations of NKUA in quantitative and qualitatively terms. The latter is the result of the retirement of faculty members in certain disciplines that have not been replaced.

Major challenges for NKUA include the integration of a sizable number of schools and departments from diverse disciplines as well as updating and further expanding its academic reach. The establishment of an effective quality management system across different parts of the university presents a further challenge as NKUA needs to be proactive and continuously responsive with respect to the changing needs of its stakeholders.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

Principle 1: Institution Policy for Quality Assurance

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD APPLY A QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY AS PART OF THEIR STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT. THIS POLICY SHOULD BE DEVELOPED AND ADJUSTED ACCORDING TO THE INSTITUTIONS' AREAS OF ACTIVITY. IT SHOULD ALSO BE MADE PUBLIC AND IMPLEMENTED BY ALL PARTIES INVOLVED.

The quality assurance policy is the guiding document which sets the operating principles of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS), the principles for the continuous improvement of the Institution, as well as the Institution's obligation for public accountability. It supports the development of quality culture, according to which, all internal stakeholders assume responsibility for quality and engage in quality assurance. This policy has a formal status and is publicly available.

The policy for quality is implemented through:

- *the commitment for compliance with the laws and regulations that govern the Institution;*
- *the establishment, review, redesign and redefinition of quality assurance objectives, that are fully in line with the institutional strategy.*

This policy mainly supports:

- *the organisation of the internal quality assurance system;*
- *the Institution's leadership, departments and other organisational units, individual staff members and students to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance;*
- *the integrity of academic principles and ethics, guarding against discriminations, and encouragement of external stakeholders to be involved in quality assurance;*
- *the continuous improvement of learning and teaching, research and innovation;*
- *the quality assurance of the programmes and their alignment with the relevant HQA Standards;*
- *the effective organisation of services and the development and maintenance of infrastructure;*
- *the allocation and effective management of the necessary resources for the operation of the Institution;*
- *the development and rational allocation of human resources.*

The way in which this policy is designed, approved, implemented, monitored and revised constitutes one of the processes of the internal quality assurance system.

Institution compliance

The NKUA has set specific targets for its Schools and Departments in accordance with the quality criteria for Higher Education established by the Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency (HQA) with the aim of systematically promoting the intellectual, professional, social, and personal development of national and international (ERASMUS) students. NKUA is committed to excellence through the delivery of modern undergraduate and postgraduate education. NKUA is also committed to implementing the highest standards in research, as judged by international professional organizations across a wide range of subjects thus ensuring that research and innovation are integral to academic excellence.

NKUA has an established quality assurance policy that is in line with the Institution's strategic goals. The policy aims to use transparent procedures as well as reinforce communication with different stakeholders although it appears that external stakeholders are not always fully aware of the procedure. The policy has helped NKUA achieve high ranking in international university ranking systems, for instance in the Shanghai Rankings. The IQAS allows key performance indicators (KPI) to be readily available with procedures that facilitate their review. The policy on quality assurance complies with the laws and regulations governing the institution and sets objectives for quality improvement aligned with both institutional strategy and the standards of HQA. NKUA complies and adopts government directives as they are published in the Government Gazette (FEKs).

The procedures included within the IQAS of NKUA, highlight the commitment to continuous improvement based on quality metrics to strengthen the review and update of the existing educational procedures at all levels of instruction, undergraduate teaching (UGT), postgraduate teaching (PGT), and postgraduate research (PGR). Course improvements are performed using the internal quality procedure steps on an annual basis, while any identified needs for modifications and required actions discussed in the General Assembly are implemented at the end of every academic year. It is worth noting that any identified modifications, through the IQAS of NKUA, engaging the students, accounting for the data collected by the student questionnaires, as well as academic research, are taken into consideration in a timely fashion despite constraints on resources. The policy supports the organization of services and infrastructure as well as the allocation of necessary resources for the successful operation of the IQAS of NKUA.

The IQAS is formulated based on a closed review loop starting with the students' questionnaire at each one of the 33 departments of NKUA with each departmental Internal Evaluation Group (IEG/OMEA), communicating to the 7-member Governing Committee MODIP (including EDIP) and discussed at the General Assembly. This presents a structured way for the continuous improvement of quality assurance processes. The detailed information on membership for each IEG (OMEA) and MODIP is described in MODIP's web pages (<http://modip.uoa.gr/modip/skopos.html>).

Some departments, such as the Department of History and Archaeology and the Department of Mathematics have set clear KPIs in several areas. For instance, archaeological excavations to increase student engagement, offering small-size elective courses to achieve better space management, use of software tools to increase computer literacy, or proposing to limit the maximum amount of time allowed for completing graduate studies in order to reduce the number of graduate students not finishing studies on-time. The IQAS of NKUA clearly states that 33 departmental IEGs (OMEAs) have an allocated seat to the IQAS. However, it should be noted that most OMEA members were not present in the meeting held with the Panel. A wider representation of OMEA members would have helped the Panel to achieve a fuller understanding of the implementation of IQAS across the NKUA.

Panel judgement

Please tick one of the following:

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

Panel Recommendations

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

A stronger and systematic relationship with external stakeholders, in particular partners in industry, should be cultivated in order to have a more robust IQAS.

Principle 2: Provision and Management of the Necessary Resources

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD ENSURE APPROPRIATE FUNDING FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING ACTIVITIES, RESEARCH, AND ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES IN GENERAL. RELEVANT REGULATIONS SHOULD BE IN PLACE TO ASSURE THAT ADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES FOR TEACHING AND RESEARCH ARE AVAILABLE AND READILY ACCESSIBLE (E.G. CLASSROOMS, LABORATORIES, LIBRARIES, IT INFRASTRUCTURE, PROVISION OF FREE MEALS, DORMITORIES, CAREER GUIDANCE AND SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES, ETC.).

Funding

The Institution ensures adequate funding to cover not only the overhead and operational costs (regular budget and public investment budget) but also costs related to research, innovation and development (Special Account for Research Funds, Property Development and Management Company). The financial planning and the operation of an effective financial management system constitute necessary tools for the full exploitation of the resources.

Infrastructure

Based on the requirements and needs arising during its operation, the Institution has determined ways to define, allocate and maintain all the necessary resources to ensure its smooth and proper functioning, i.e. teaching, research and auxiliary facilities, equipment and software, support facilities (cleaning, transportation, communication) etc. The scope of the IQAS should include a suitable managing and monitoring system to safeguard the infrastructure. Compliance to the internal regulations is also necessary.

Working environment

The Institution ensures -as far as possible- that the working environment has a positive effect on the performance of all members of the academic community (students and staff). Factors that are taken into consideration towards the creation of such a favorable environment are, among others, the sanitary facilities, the lighting/heating/ventilation system, the cleanliness and the overall appearance of the premises, etc. The scope of the IQAS should include an appropriate managing and monitoring system to promote a favorable working environment and to ensure compliance with the existing provisions.

Human resources

The Institution and the academic units are responsible for the human resources development.

The subject areas, as well as the competences and tasks of the staff members are defined by the corresponding job descriptions that are established within the operation scope of each academic or administrative unit. These posts are filled following the requirements set by the law, on the basis of transparent, fair and published processes. The continuous training and evaluation of the staff is considered necessary for the enhancement of the performance, which is recorded and monitored as provided in the context of the IQAS.

The Institution should acknowledge and provide the necessary resources for the implementation of the IQAS, its enhancement and the provision of services that assist the satisfaction of the quality assurance requirements. Moreover, the Institution (Quality Assurance Unit-QAU) should properly organise the administrative structure and staffing of the IQAS, with a clear allocation of competences and tasks to its staff members.

Institution compliance

The necessary resources related to funding, infrastructure, working environment and human resources are determined by the Greek Ministry of Education. The process starts with the various administrative units at departmental and school level assessing their needs based on student intake as well as the state of present infrastructure.

The economic situation in Greece in the past few years has negatively impacted funding provided to the NKUA. However, despite dramatic cuts in funding, the University has made remarkable efforts to sustain a satisfactory level of services and an adequate maintenance of infrastructure. A major impact of reduced funding is evident in the hiring freeze of new teaching and administrative personnel that has resulted in the understaffing of many departments. The Panel was very impressed with the fact that many faculty members teach more hours than the 6-hour workload that is normally expected. During discussions with faculty, the Panel became aware that some faculty members were not able to take a sabbatical for a long time because a replacement to cover their teaching duties could not be found.

Funding

The NKUA appears to have a very efficient funding management system to administer its limited resources. This is despite the dramatic reduction in state funding, from 40m euros to 10m euros, in the last few years according to the ELKE statement. Thanks to efficiently managing its financial and other resources, the NKUA has been able to survive and grow amid the adverse economic situation prevailing in Greece over the past few years that has resulted in a 75% reduction of state funding to the Institution. Reduction of operating costs was achieved through the significant decrease in rental expenses, the switch from petrol to natural gas for heating, the installation of solar panels for electricity generation and other innovative measures.

Infrastructure & Working environment

Based on periodic reviews and the use of IQAS, the NKUA has specific ways to identify its needs in infrastructure for teaching, learning, and research purposes. Furthermore, the NKUA tries continuously to identify international best practices in higher education and research with a view to adopting them to its schools and departments. An effective system appears to be in place for the maintenance of equipment, buildings and the property of the NKUA. However, the drastic reduction in state funding has not allowed new buildings to be built or new equipment to be purchased. Following discussions with faculty and student representatives it appears that the University lacks certain modern equipment and many departments are in need of new facilities. For instance, the facilities of the Physical Education Department seem to be inadequate for the training of students.

The NKUA is a large urban institution with facilities dispersed over a large metropolitan area with a variety of working conditions. Nevertheless, given the present economic situation in Greece, conditions in the working environment appear to be generally favourable and adequate. Both faculty and administrative staff that the Panel had discussions with seemed to be very satisfied with the working environment, extremely proud and highly committed to the University.

Human resources

Human resources activities have been adversely affected as a result of the financial constraints that NKUA has been facing during the past few years. It appears that faculty and staff may not always be able to adequately comply with the expectations of students and appropriately respond to their needs. For example, incoming students may need to receive a more thorough orientation and subsequent follow-ups in the course of their studies.

Panel judgement

| Principle 2: Provision & Management of the Necessary Resources | |
|---|----------|
| 2.1 Funding | |
| Fully compliant | x |
| Substantially compliant | |
| Partially compliant | |
| Non-compliant | |
| 2.2 Infrastructure | |
| Fully compliant | |
| Substantially compliant | x |
| Partially compliant | |
| Non-compliant | |
| 2.3 Working Environment | |
| Fully compliant | x |
| Substantially compliant | |
| Partially compliant | |
| Non-compliant | |
| 2.4 Human Resources | |
| Fully compliant | |
| Substantially compliant | x |
| Partially compliant | |
| Non-compliant | |

| Principle 2: Provision & Management of the Necessary Resources (overall) | |
|---|----------|
| Fully compliant | x |
| Substantially compliant | |
| Partially compliant | |
| Non-compliant | |

Panel Recommendations

The Panel recommends a change in the legal framework allowing the University to engage in funding campaigns. It is disturbing to witness universities in many other countries raising an increasing portion of their funding from private sources while Greek institutions cannot freely attract private funding. For example, while many foreign universities have named endowed chairs in several fields, NKUA cannot raise funds for similar purposes.

A further recommendation refers to the establishment of an effective orientation programme for incoming freshmen. A more informative introduction regarding demands and challenges of student life may allow the University to increase its retention rate and help more students to graduate within the designated time frame.

It is also recommended that a dedicated plan and related procedures for the maintenance and improvement of the infrastructure including the exterior of buildings and grounds be set in place.

Principle 3: Establishing Goals for Quality Assurance

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD HAVE CLEAR AND EXPLICIT GOALS REGARDING THE ASSURANCE AND CONTINUOUS UPGRADE OF THE QUALITY OF THE OFFERED PROGRAMMES, THE RESEARCH AND INNOVATION ACTIVITIES, AS WELL AS THE SCIENTIFIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES. THESE GOALS MAY BE QUALITATIVE OR QUANTITATIVE AND REFLECT THE INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGY.

The Institution's strategy on quality assurance should be translated into time-specific, qualitative and quantitative goals which are regularly monitored, measured and reviewed in the context of the IQAS operation, and following an appropriate procedure.

Examples of quality goals:

- *rise of the average annual graduation rate of the Institution's Undergraduate Programmes to x%;*
- *upgrade of the learning environment through the introduction of digital applications on*;
- *improvement of the ratio of scientific publications to teaching staff members to*;
- *rise of the total research funding to y%*

The goals are accompanied by a specific action plan for their achievement, and entail the participation of all stakeholders.

Institution compliance

The Panel established that the IQAS of the NKUA includes a large number of specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely goals regarding programmes of study offered, teaching methods, research & innovation, and administration and resources. Examples of some notable goals are:

- The continuous improvement of the programmes of study of the institution;
- the decrease in student dropout rates and the decrease in the number of years needed for graduation;
- the support of the research projects of the institution;
- the increase in the number of publications in top-ranked international journals;
- the continuous improvement of working conditions of academic and administrative personnel;
- the achievement of more cooperation among the various departments and schools of the University;
- the enhancement of cooperation with foreign institutions with the goal of increasing student and faculty mobility;
- the increase of research cooperative agreements with domestic and international Universities;
- the recruitment of high calibre faculty from Greece and abroad;
- the cooperation with international ranking agencies with the purpose of improving the University's academic standing;
- the introduction of measures aiming at reducing the University's environmental impact;
- the establishment of new multidisciplinary post-graduate programmes of study;

- the improvement of relations with alumni in order to improve the long-term goals of the University.

The Panel determined that NKUA's goals are in line with the overall institutional strategy and paired with suitable KPIs as these are set by the independent Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency (HQA), as well as European standards of good practice. The goals are periodically reviewed, updated, and communicated to the University's stakeholders.

Panel judgement

| Principle 3: Establishing Goals for Quality Assurance | |
|---|----------|
| 3.1 Study Programmes/ education activities | |
| Fully compliant | |
| Substantially compliant | x |
| Partially compliant | |
| Non-compliant | |
| 3.2 Research & Innovation | |
| Fully compliant | x |
| Substantially compliant | |
| Partially compliant | |
| Non-compliant | |
| 3.3 Administration (funding, human resources, infrastructure management) | |
| Fully compliant | x |
| Substantially compliant | |
| Partially compliant | |
| Non-compliant | |
| 3.4 Resources (funding, human resources, infrastructure) | |
| Fully compliant | x |
| Substantially compliant | |
| Partially compliant | |
| Non-compliant | |

| Principle 3: Establishing Goals for Quality Assurance (overall) | |
|--|----------|
| Fully compliant | x |
| Substantially compliant | |
| Partially compliant | |
| Non-compliant | |

Panel Recommendations

The Panel believes that achieving some of the ambitious long-term goals that the NKUA has established may prove to be challenging due to the constraints present in the environment of

higher education in Greece which are beyond the control of the University. Nevertheless, a better job needs to be done towards meeting some of these goals. For example, there is no systematic interaction between the University and its alumni although both alumni and faculty feel that this is necessary. The large number of successful NKUA's graduates in Greece and abroad represents a tremendous opportunity that the University has still to take advantage of.

The Panel also believes that, although student questionnaires are well structured, an additional generic comments text box to allow students to comment on other aspects related to the delivery of the unit may be helpful for example, the adequacy of information provided on the e-class platform. In addition, it would make sense to formulate some KPI for the administrative and IT services for instance website data updating durations.

A further recommendation by the Panel is the formulation of some quantitative KPIs such as the number of MoUs. This will allow for an effective evaluation of the extent that certain goals have been achieved in the future.

Principle 4: Structure, Organisation and Operation of the IQAS

INSTITUTIONS SET UP AND ESTABLISH AN INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM, WHICH INCLUDES PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES COVERING ALL AREAS OF ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES AND FUNCTIONS. SPECIAL FOCUS IS GIVEN ON THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING, INCLUDING THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT, RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND GOVERNANCE.

The key goal of the internal quality assurance system (IQAS) is the development, effective operation and continuous improvement of the whole range of the Institution's activities, and particularly, of teaching, research, innovation, governance and relevant services, according to the international practices - especially those of the European Higher Education Area - and the HQA principles and guidelines described in these Standards.

Structure and organisation

In each Institution, the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) holds the responsibility for the administration and management of the IQAS. The QAU is set up according to the existing legislative framework and is responsible for:

- *the development of specialised policy, strategy and relevant processes towards the continuous improvement of the quality of the Institution's work and provisions;*
- *the organisation, operation and continuous improvement of the Institution's internal quality assurance system;*
- *the coordination and support of the evaluation process of the Institution's academic units and other services, and;*
- *the support of the external evaluation and accreditation process of the Institution's programmes and internal quality assurance system in the context of the HQA principles and guidelines.*

The Institution's IQAS and its implementation processes are determined by the decisions of the competent bodies, as provided by the law, and are published in the Government Gazette, as well as on the Institution's website. The above are reviewed every six years, at the latest.

To achieve the above goals, the QAU collaborates with HQA, develops and maintains a management information system to store the evaluation data, which are periodically submitted to HQA, according to the latter's instructions. The QAU is responsible for the systematic monitoring of the evaluation process and for the publication of evaluation-related procedures and their results on the Institution's website.

The QAU structure has been approved by the Institution's competent bodies, as provided by the law, while all competences and tasks accruing from this structure are clearly defined.

Operation

The Institution takes action for the design, establishment, implementation, audit and maintenance of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS), taking into account the Standards' requirements, while making any necessary amendments to ensure fitness to achieve its aims.

The above actions include:

- *provision of all necessary processes and procedures for the successful operation of the IQAS, as well as implementation of the above processes and procedures on all of the Institution's parties involved ;the Institution's areas of activity can constitute the IQAS processes, e.g. teaching, research and innovation, governance, services etc. An IQAS process is an area of activity including data input, data processing and outputs. A procedure defines the way an action is implemented and includes a course of stages or steps, e.g. the curriculum design procedure;*
- *determination of how the IQAS procedures / processes are audited, measured and assessed, and how they interact;*
- *provision of all necessary resources to enable the IQAS function.*

Documentation

The IQAS documentation includes, among other things, a series of key documents demonstrating its structure and organisation, such as the Quality Manual, which describes how the Standards' requirements are met.

The Annexes of the Quality Manual include:

- the Quality Policy and the Quality Assurance Objectives;
- the necessary written Procedures, along with the entailed forms;
- the necessary Guides, External Documents (e.g. pertinent legislation), as well as any other supporting data;
- the standing organisational structure of the QAU, with a detailed description of the competences, the required qualifications and the goals for each post. The organisational chart is structured in a manner that ensures that the IQAS organisational requirements are fully and properly met.

Institution compliance

The Quality Manual is comprehensive and includes appropriate actions to ensure effective planning, implementation, and control of the processes required to achieve a clear description of the inputs and outputs, sequence, and risks and opportunities involved. The Panel found the Quality Manual up to date and easy to understand detailing methods to achieve the quality objectives, and supported by the necessary forms. It should be noted that this is in spite of the fact that MODIP is not adequately staffed. The Panel was provided with documentation describing the legal framework for the IQAS, the organization chart of NKUA and several other documents as requested. On the basis of the information provided, the Panel believes that, to a large extent, the processes are carried out as planned. Considering the size of NKUA, the Panel believes that there is a need to expand resources available to the IQAS so that the latter can adequately fulfil its role.

It should however be noted that, although the support of the internal quality assurance system in areas of academic functions and activities, within the broader context of the HQA principles and guidelines, is evident, coordination among different units of the NKUA appears to be lacking.

Panel judgement

| Principle 4: Structure, Organization and Operation of the IQAS | |
|---|----------|
| Fully compliant | |
| Substantially compliant | X |
| Partially compliant | |
| Non-compliant | |

Panel Recommendations

The Panel recommends the regular review and update of the Quality Manual. To this end, it is necessary that MODIP is adequately staffed so that it may fulfil its role.

The Panel also recommends further promoting the active engagement of all members of the IEGs/OMEAs with the internal quality assurance system. The Panel was left with the impression that not all departments were equally engaged with the accreditation review process.

Principle 5: Self-Assessment

THE INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM COMPRISES PROCEDURES PROVIDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ANNUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT OF THE INSTITUTION'S ACADEMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS, ADDRESSING AREAS OF OVERSIGHTS OR SHORTCOMINGS, AND DEFINING REMEDIAL ACTIONS TOWARDS THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE SET GOALS, AND EVENTUAL IMPROVEMENT.

The QAU conducts, on an annual basis, a self-assessment of the IQAS, following the written procedure provided for each area of activity, which is implemented by a certain academic or administrative unit, as appropriate. The procedure determines the timing, the participants, the data under consideration, and the expected outcomes. The self-assessment aims at a final estimation of the suitability of the IQAS in force, as well as at basing decisions concerning the necessary remedial or precautionary actions for improvement.

The data considered in the context of the self-assessment of a programme may, for example, include:

- *students performance;*
- *feedback from students / teaching staff;*
- *assessment of learning outcomes;*
- *graduation rates;*
- *feedback from the evaluation of the facilities / learning environment;*
- *report of any remedial or precautionary actions undertaken;*
- *suggestions for improvement.*

The outcomes of the self-assessment are recorded in internal reports drawn up by the QAU. The reports identify any areas of deviation or non-compliance with the Standards, and are communicated to the interested parties (if appropriate). The Institution's resolutions concerning any modification, compliance, or enhancement of the IQAS operation might include actions related to:

- *the upgrade of the IQAS and the pertinent processes;*
- *the upgrade of the services offered to the students;*
- *the reallocation of resources;*
- *the introduction of new quality goals, etc.*

The outcomes of the self-assessment are recorded and, along with the source data, are archived as quality files.

A special procedure is followed for the compliance check of newly launched programmes (of all three cycles), or programmes that are to be reviewed shortly, prior to the institutional approval of the programme.

Institution compliance

The Panel determined that MODIP, through its representatives in the various IEG departments of the NKUA (OMEA), carries out regular reviews of academic and administrative units of the Institution. Yet, not all administrative units and departments appear to put an equal effort in the review process. The Panel wishes to commend the departments of History and Archaeology, Mathematics, Biology, Law, Geology, and Physical Education for their high engagement with the

review process as a result of which the departments have benefitted in improving their respective curricula.

Procedures and outcomes of the self-assessment process are adequately described in the Quality Manual. Nevertheless, action plans need to describe in more detail specific actions to be taken in each administrative unit. The Panel believes that action plans are implemented in most administrative units of the University. Several examples of actions were discussed with representatives of departments where actions were taken based on the IQAS. The Department of Biology, for instance, redesigned its curriculum based on the input they received through the quality improvement process. Following the same process the Department of Geology decided to increase field activities for students while the Law Department initiated student involvement in international competitions. The examples cited do not probably capture the full extent of other departments' achievements.

Panel judgement

| Principle 5: Self-Assessment | |
|-------------------------------------|----------|
| Fully compliant | X |
| Substantially compliant | |
| Partially compliant | |
| Non-compliant | |

Panel Recommendations

OMEAs need to initiate an approach and establish related procedures in order to achieve a wider representation of internal and external stakeholders in the self-assessment process.

Principle 6: Collection of Quality Data: Measuring, Analysis and Improvement

INSTITUTIONS ARE FULLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND USE OF INFORMATION IN AN INTEGRATED, FUNCTIONAL AND READILY ACCESSIBLE MANNER, AIMING AT THE EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF THE QUALITY DATA RELATED TO TEACHING, RESEARCH AND OTHER ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES, AS WELL AS OF THOSE RELATED TO THE ADMINISTRATION.

The QAU should establish and operate an information system to manage the data required for the implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System.

The QAU measures and monitors the performance of the various activities of the Institution, through appropriate procedures established in the context of the IQAS structure, and assesses their level of effectiveness. The measuring and monitoring is conducted on a basis of indices and data provided by HQA in the pertinent guidelines and forms, which are part of the National Information System for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (NISQA). These measurements may concern: the size of the student body, the size of the teaching and administrative staff, the infrastructure, the structural components of the curricula, students' performance, research activity performance, financial data, feedback on student and faculty satisfaction surveys, data related to the teaching and research activity, services, infrastructure, etc.

The QAU makes use of the figures and presents the results for consideration using statistical analysis. Outcomes are displayed through histograms and charts. This sort of information is used by the Institution for decision making, at all levels, pursuing improvement, as well as for setting, monitoring, assessing and reviewing the Institution's strategic and operational goals.

Institution compliance

Using a variety of methods and systems, NKUA regularly collects data on the student body, teaching methods, faculty and administrative staff, innovation, infrastructure and finance. The Panel noted a trend towards the use of electronic systems to replace traditional methods of manual data collection. For instance, electronic student evaluations are widely used to collect feedback about the quality of instruction. Google Scholar has been used to disseminate the impact of research conducted by faculty thus helping to substantially improve NKUA's standing in international rankings. Regular inventories of buildings and infrastructure are utilized to determine the future needs of the University. NKUA appears to employ a rigorous auditing system to control the appropriate disbursement of its financial resources. Overall, the data collected appears to be accurate and reliable and they are checked by an auditing unit.

As mentioned earlier student evaluation surveys are regularly collected and the information is systematically analysed, communicated and used towards improvement. However, the Panel believes that more effort should be put into processing the data and utilizing survey findings.

NKUA evaluates data related to the adequacy of its resources and infrastructure such as equipment, IT facilities, reading rooms and libraries. However, updating and replacing resources and infrastructure is limited by the, substantially reduced, financial support the University receives from the Greek state.

NKUA makes serious efforts to adopt recommendations offered by internal and external reviews. Data collected are often presented in graphs and pie charts, demonstrating trends over time thus allowing better interpretation and comparisons.

The above processes enable NKUA to reach its strategic and operational goals and establish new ones taking into consideration developments in scientific fields and international best practices.

Panel judgement

| Principle 6: Collection of Data: Measuring, Analysis & Improvement | |
|---|----------|
| 6.1 Study Programmes / education activities | |
| Fully compliant | |
| Substantially compliant | x |
| Partially compliant | |
| Non-compliant | |
| 6.2 Research & Innovation | |
| Fully compliant | x |
| Substantially compliant | |
| Partially compliant | |
| Non-compliant | |
| 6.3 Activities related to the administration (funding, human resources, infrastructure management) | |
| Fully compliant | x |
| Substantially compliant | |
| Partially compliant | |
| Non-compliant | |
| 6.4 Human Resources | |
| Fully compliant | x |
| Substantially compliant | |
| Partially compliant | |
| Non-compliant | |

| Principle 6: Collection of Data: Measuring, Analysis & Improvement (overall) | |
|---|----------|
| Fully compliant | x |
| Substantially compliant | |
| Partially compliant | |
| Non-compliant | |

Panel Recommendations

The Panel recommends that NKUA sets specific periods during the academic year when all administrative units will review the accomplished goals and plan for the future in a more systematic way.

The Panel also recommends that the quantitative and qualitative data from student questionnaires measure the mean values against the KPIs set by the Institution agenda. For instance, it could be very helpful for the departments to provide faculty members' scores and the average performance indicators of each department as a whole to facilitate the IQAS.

Principle 7: Public Information

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD PUBLISH INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR TEACHING AND ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES IN A DIRECT AND ACCESSIBLE MANNER. ALL PERTINENT INFORMATION SHOULD BE UP-TO-DATE, CLEAR AND OBJECTIVE.

The QAU publishes data related to IQAS structure, organisation and operation. Furthermore, the QAU publishes data pertinent to the institutional quality policy and objectives, as well as information and data relevant to the Institution's internal and external evaluation. In the context of the self-assessment process, the QAU verifies that adequate information regarding the teaching activities and, particularly, the programmes' profile and the overall institutional activity is publicly available. QAU makes recommendations for improvement, where appropriate.

Institution compliance

The institution has a comprehensive website where important information on teaching, research, and other academic activities is publicly available. Undergraduate and postgraduate programs of study, curricula, course outlines and timetables as well as assessment items and criteria for assessment are displayed in webpages of departments and schools. It was noticed that Curriculum Vitae of several faculty members are not available on the NKUA's website. In addition, it would be helpful if a uniform template following European standards for instance, the Europass, is used in the CVs.

The website of the University has a special section on the IQAS structure and operation (MODIP and IGS). NKUA's mission statement and the Quality Assurance Policy are available online. The Internal and External Evaluation Reports of the Institution and various departments are accessible through the website and seem to be regularly updated.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The Panel recommends a uniform presentation of information appearing on websites of different departments. For example, many faculty CVs do not follow a common format.

A further recommendation relates to the display of curricula in different departments. While individual courses are listed, it is often not possible to get a detailed course description or a syllabus. In an era where students receive most information from the internet, it is important to have a more detailed website ensuring that there are no missing pages.

It is also recommended that departments update and clearly display their research activities. This also may help the University in its quest for improvements in international rankings.

The CVs for all Faculty members should be written and identified in a uniform format. These should include degrees and institutions attended, areas of research interests, and current research work. For example, using a structure following the European standards (e.g. the Europass).

Finally, and based on the Panel's own experience as well as that of students, the University's website needs to be made more user-friendly.

Principle 8: External Evaluation and Accreditation of the IQAS

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD BE PERIODICALLY EVALUATED BY COMMITTEES OF EXTERNAL EXPERTS SET BY HQA, FOR THE PURPOSE OF ACCREDITATION OF THEIR INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS (IQAS). THE PERIODICITY OF THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION IS DETERMINED BY HQA.

External quality assurance, in the case in point external evaluation aiming at accreditation, may act as a means of verification of the effectiveness of the Institution's internal quality assurance, and as a catalyst for improvement, while opening new perspectives. Additionally, it can provide information with a view to public acknowledgement of the positive course of the Institution's activities.

The Higher Education Institutions engage in periodic external quality assurance which is conducted taking into consideration any special requirements set by the legislation governing the operation of the Institutions and their academic units.

Quality assurance, in this case 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 ensure that the progress made since the last external quality assurance activity is taken into consideration when preparing for the next one.

Institution compliance

It appears that the NKUA was originally somewhat sceptical about the functions and usefulness of external evaluation committees and external accreditation panels. However, following interaction with the EECs, the importance and usefulness of IQAS have become part of the NKUA culture. This has resulted in a more effective process and improvement of the IQAS.

As the process develops, more faculty and staff members should become aware of the importance of the IQAS role and goals. It should, however, be noted that not all stakeholders, such as the local industry and alumni, are actively engaged. A more systematic effort is required in order to engage all stakeholders.

The continuous accreditation of the NKUA ranges for periods of up to 4-years after the first accreditation review. The progress made since the last external quality assurance evaluation was significant in certain areas but continuous improvement is necessary in areas that the University is lagging behind.

Panel judgement

| Principle 8: External Evaluation & Accreditation of the IQAS | |
|--|----------|
| Fully compliant | x |
| Substantially compliant | |
| Partially compliant | |
| Non-compliant | |

Panel Recommendations

The Panel recommends that a sustained effort be undertaken to achieve the familiarization and deeper involvement of both internal and external stakeholders including faculty, staff, local industry and alumni in the role and continuous improvement of IQAS.

The Panel recommends that all department IEG/OMEA representatives should be equally and thoroughly engaged in the IQAS external review and its contribution to institutional improvement.

The Panel also recommends the implementation of the EEC recommendations within the IQAS procedures.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

Please state aspects of good practice identified, with regard to the IQAS.

- The development of student evaluation surveys.
- The establishment of the e-class electronic platform for facilitating course delivery.
- The presence of a mechanism to maintain the interior and exterior of some emblematic buildings in very good/excellent condition.
- The long-term planning of establishing new facilities, for example, Technopolis at Chalkis, which can help strategically position the Institution to respond to the future needs of the society and economy.
- The existence of a strategy to reduce the energy/environmental footprint.

II. Areas of Weakness

Please state weak areas identified, with regard to the IQAS.

- There is no established Institutional procedure for periodically engaging internal and external stakeholders during the process of course development and review, as well as other Institutional activities.
- There is no induction and mentoring mechanism for new faculty members.
- There is no mechanism to capture and report the faculty members' teaching load, research activities and administrative duties.
- There is no supporting mentoring to facilitate the progress of academically weaker students.
- There is no career office with links to industry that can improve graduate employability.
- The buildings and ground assessment mechanism is not included in the NKUA KPIs infrastructure strategy to reinforce periodic inspections and maintenance.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

Please make any specific recommendations for development.

- Develop a strategy and procedures to ensure the sustainable and continuous engagement with stakeholders that can help secure long-term funding, develop human resources and provide opportunities to improve infrastructure.
- Establish a mechanism within MODIP and OMEAs to ensure the engagement with internal and external stakeholders.
- Faculty members CVs should be written and identified in a uniform format. These should include degrees and institutions attended, areas of research interests, and current research work.

- Establish a mechanism to efficiently monitor the numbers of PhD candidates in relation to the available resources.
- Establish a mechanism to facilitate the development and promotion of new products/services in cooperation with private industry.
- While acknowledging the financial constraints faced by the Institution it is still possible to implement a large number of recommendations made in this report.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are:

- (2) Provision and management of the necessary resources
- (3) Establishing goals for their Quality Assurance
- (5) Self-assessment
- (6) Collection of Quality Data: measuring, analysis and improvement
- (7) Public information
- (8) External evaluation and accreditation of the IQAS

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are:

- (1) Institution Policy for Quality Assurance
- (4) Structure, Organization and Operation of the IQAS

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are: None

The Principles where failure of compliance was identified are: None

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

The members of the Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname

Signature

- 1. Prof. Evangelos Dedousis, (Chair)**, The American University in Dubai,
Dubai, United Arab Emirates
- 2. Dr. Demetrios Kazantzis**, Del's Lemonade & Refreshments, Inc.,
Cranston, Rhode Island, USA
- 3. Dr. Konstantinos Kopsidas**, The University of Manchester,
Manchester United Kingdom
- 4. Prof. George Nakos**, Clayton State University, Morrow, USA
- 5. Prof. Ioannis Violaris**, City Unity College, Nicosia, Cyprus