



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



**Εθνική Αρχή
Ανώτατης Εκπαίδευσης**
Hellenic Authority
for Higher Education

Αριστείδου 1 & Ευριπίδου 2 • 10559 Αθήνα | 1 Aristidou str. & 2 Evripidou str. • 10559 Athens, Greece
T. +30 210 9220 944 • **F.** +30 210 9220 143 • **E.** secretariat@ethaae.gr • www.ethaae.gr

Accreditation Report

for the Undergraduate Study Programme of:

Turkish Studies and Modern Asian Studies

**Institution: National and
Kapodistrian University of Athens**

Date: 25 February 2023

Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the Undergraduate Study Programme of **Turkish Studies and Modern Asian Studies** of the **National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA)** for the purposes of granting accreditation.

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PART A: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW

I. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the Undergraduate Study Programme of **Turkish Studies and Modern Asian Studies** of the **National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA)** comprised the following four (4) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

1. Professor Dimitrios Triantaphyllou (Chair)

Kadir Has University, Istanbul, Turkey

2. Professor Yaser Ellethy

VU-Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands

3. Professor Onur Yildirim

Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey

4. Ms. Maria Rachil Mpiutu, Student

Department of Balkan, Slavic & Oriental Studies, University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki, Greece

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

In reviewing the Undergraduate Study Programme of Turkish Studies and Modern Asian Studies (hereafter the “Programme”) of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (hereafter “NKUA”), the objectives of the Panel, as described in the Guidelines for the Members of the External Evaluation and Accreditation Panel (EEAP), are:

- to establish whether the data provided from the various resources is consistent among one another and reflect the actual situation.
- identify strengths and areas of weakness.
- engage in a constructive dialogue with the Institution, leading to reflection and continuous enhancement of the Study Programme.

Prior to their visit in Athens, the members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel (EEAP) had the opportunity to study all accreditation support materials supplied to them by HAHE in advance, including:

- HAHE Materials such as P12a_Guidelines for the Members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel, P13_MAPPING GRID for the members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel for Study Programmes, European Qualifications Framework, P1A Standards for Quality Accreditation of Undergraduate Programmes, P14_Template for the Accreditation Report;
- Relevant Turkish Studies and Modern Asian Studies Material; and
- the Department’s Proposal for Accreditation along with several annexes.

Before travelling to Athens, the EEAP members were provided with a detailed PPT prepared by HAHE’s General Director, Dr Christina Besta which outlined the accreditation process and provided pertinent information on HAHE’s mission, on the guidelines of the Quality Assurance process, and the role and tasks of the EEAP members.

The Panel visited the Department of Turkish Studies and Modern Asian Studies (hereafter the “Department”) on two consecutive days, 20 and 21 February 2023, and worked on preparing its Accreditation Report (hereafter the “Report”) between 22 and 25 February 2023. All four members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel were physically present in all meetings.

Following a well-prepared schedule provided by HAHE, the Panel held several separate interactive meetings during the two-day site visit as follows:

On **Monday, 20 February**, the following meetings took place:

- with Professor Dimitris Karadimas, Vice-Rector/MODIP President and Professor Eleni Sella, Chair of the Department of Turkish Studies and Modern Asian Studies
- with OMEA and MODIP members and staff
- with graduates of the Department of Turkish Studies and Modern Asian Studies
- with employers, social partners, and external stakeholders

On **Tuesday, 21 February**, the following meetings took place:

- with members of the teaching staff
- with undergraduate students currently attending the Programme

- with administrative staff including the Head of the Department Secretariat; and staff from the Faculty Library
- visited classrooms, lecture halls, libraries and learning resources, offices, and other facilities.
- meeting with members and staff of OMEA and MODIP
- meeting with the Vice-Rector/President of MODIP and the Head of the Department, plus members and staff of OMEA and MODIP.

During the aforementioned meetings, the Panel had the opportunity to meet, talk and interact with all the participants at all meetings. The discussions were very constructive and fruitful and were conducted in a cooperative manner and attitude. During the last meeting, the Panel made an informal presentation of some initial key findings.

The internal evaluation report of the Department and other extensive material were made available to the Panel electronically in advance through HAHE. More information, documentation and clarifications were made during the meetings. The Department and the University worked diligently in preparing the internal evaluation report and other relevant materials, as well as in organizing and hosting the meetings, including those held remotely (with the graduates, and with the employers and social partners). The Department and MODIP provided the Panel members with supplemental materials which were requested by the Panel members while drafting the Report. All the meetings included presentations, discussions, and question and answer sessions.

It is the feeling of the EEAP Panel members that the Department performed a good job throughout the internal evaluation process and the objectives of the process have been met. The eagerness of the Department staff to answer questions and provide additional information and clarifications during and after the meetings are worth noting.

It is, also, worth pointing out that students were especially encouraged by the Panel to talk freely about their overall learning experience. They welcomed the opportunity to participate in this evaluation process and voice their views.

We wish to express our thanks and appreciation to the Department and the University administration for their cooperation, professionalism, and eagerness to provide clarifications and respond to all the questions posed by the Panel.

This Report is based on information collected and views expressed during the meetings as well as on information contained in the internal evaluation report and other documents submitted before, during, and the meetings, including presentations and clarifications.

III. Study Programme Profile

The Department of Turkish Studies and Modern Asian Studies of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA) was established in 2003-4 (Law No. 65/2004), as part of the School of Philosophy. In 2013, it became part of the newly established School of Economics and Political Science (Law No. 124/2013).

According to its founding documents, the scope and mandate of the Department are: “to cultivate and promote, through teaching and research, the literature, history, culture, political institutions and economy of Turkey and of Asian countries (Japan, India, China); [...] to organise postgraduate studies aimed to educate specialised scientists in specific fields; to provide documented knowledge and scientific data to the public administration, facilitating co-operation with Turkey and Asian countries (Japan, India and China)”.

In terms of its aims and objectives, the Department:

- Fulfils a long-standing requirement, both within the NKUA and the academic community in general;
- Transcends in terms of its scope the boundaries of the traditional organisation and focus of studies, within Greek academia, by extending into the “Area Studies” domain. More specifically, since its establishment, the Department focuses on the geographical and geo-cultural system of Turkey (language, history, and culture) and the Greater Middle East;
- Concentrates on the study of Turkey’s language, history, and culture;
- Aims to bring peoples and states closer together by investing in education, by comprehending and respecting the physiognomy, the particularities and, generally, the cultural level of the “Other”;
- Aims to make a significant contribution to increasing the knowledge and understanding, not only of the other side of the Aegean, but also of the wider super-systemic area of the Greater Middle East and Central Asia.

The curriculum of the Department prioritises two distinct programmes of studies [specialisation routes (cycles)] while simultaneously training the students to achieve proficiency in Turkish (from A1 to C2).

The two specialization routes are:

- Turkish Language and Philology;
- History, Social, Strategic Studies and Geopolitics.

The programme of study is divided into core and specialized courses. Core Courses are offered during semesters 1 to 4 while specialization courses are offered during semesters 5 to 8. The specialization courses provide for a mix of Compulsory and Compulsory Elective Courses. The courses are divided into introductory courses, prerequisite courses, and specialization courses. A thesis (BA Dissertation) option is also available accounting for two elaborated under the guidance of two supervisors.

The declared overall aim of the undergraduate program is to teach, cultivate and promote proficiency in Turkish, at university level (from A1 to C2); to cultivate and promote knowledge

of Turkish literature, translation theory and practice, history, society and culture of Turkey; to teach and promote knowledge in Linguistics, in particular in Comparative Linguistics and the didactics of Turkish as a foreign language; to cultivate and promote knowledge of the geographical and geo-cultural system of the Turkish and Islamic world, and of the Greater Middle Eastern geographical, geo-economic and geopolitical context; to promote knowledge in relation to competition and systems of balances and redistribution of power in the Greater Middle Eastern and Mediterranean complex; to contribute to the communication between Greece and Turkey (and within the Mediterranean and Middle Eastern complex) at scientific, cultural, socio-political, economic, and geopolitical levels; to contribute to international scientific dialogue in the fields of Turkish Language and Philology, and in the fields of History, Social and Strategic Studies and Geopolitics, in the Greater Middle East, with a particular focus on the Turkish world.

The completion of the programme requires students to accumulate 67 courses (63 compulsory and 4 elective) for a total of 243 European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) credits for the specialization route on “Turkish Language and Philology” and 244 ECTS credits for the specialization route on “History, Social, Strategic Studies and Geopolitics”, leading to the awarding of a bachelor’s degree. Students also have the option to write a thesis for a value of 10 ECTS credits (in lieu of 2 elective courses).

Students are required to take 11 compulsory courses in the first and seventh semesters of study; 10 compulsory courses in the second semester; 9 compulsory courses in the third, fifth, and sixth semesters; 8 compulsory courses in the fourth semester; and 6 compulsory courses in the eighth semester. The students are also required to take four electives overall.

The Department is supported by four laboratories. These include the Laboratory for Geo-cultural Analyses of the Greater Middle East and Turkey; the Laboratory of Informatics and Corpus Linguistics; the laboratory of Sociolinguistics, Turkish Language; Translation and Interpreting; and the Laboratory of Islamic Law and Arab-Islamic Studies.

The Department also provides several other services that help enhance the professional skills and outreach of their students. These include:

- Pedagogical competence for students (since 2013) – a Programme for the certification of the students’ pedagogical competence (i.e., certification of theoretical and practical skills required for teaching Turkish as a foreign language).
- National Foreign Language Exam System (since 2009) – a Programme, funded by the European Social Fund, aiming at measuring the competence/proficiency in Turkish, executed in collaboration with the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.
- Didactic Competence Development and Certification for Graduates (since 2021) – a four-month programme for teaching Turkish as a foreign language.
- Lifelong Learning Programme/Erasmus+ & Erasmus Placement (since 2011/2012).
- Student Stage/Internship Programme – implemented in the context of the National Strategic Reference Framework (NSRF-ESPA).

The Department is also actively involved in the European CIVIS University Network which embodies the values of multi-disciplinarity, multiculturalism, and multilingualism.

The number of positions available for new students to be admitted to the Programme every year is approximately 90. The total number of registered and active students (of all years) during the 2019-2020 Academic year was 1,125, of which 546 were active students.

The objectives of the Programme are comparable to those offered by other relevant programs. Its content is balanced and appropriately designed to meet international standards and the needs and challenges of a modern society. The structure of the Programme and the courses offered are consistent with the Department's overall objectives, and include required and elective courses, seminars, and practical training.

The Programme is supported by a faculty of eleven (11) professors and lecturers; one (1) professor emeritus; two (2) visiting faculty members from other departments/universities; one (1) special teaching staff member (EEP); one (1) laboratory teaching staff member (EDIP); one (1) special technical and laboratory staff member (ETEP); and eight (8) contracted university teachers (for the Fall 2022/2023 semester). The Department's administrative and technical staff number four (4) persons.

The Department has an active postgraduate programme offering an MA in Geopolitical Analysis, Geo-Strategic Synthesis and Defence and International Studies. A second Postgraduate programme offering an MA in Translation and Interpretation is currently inactive. The Department also offers a Doctoral studies programme, which has granted 15 doctorates to date. The Department also offers three E-learning programmes related to the geopolitics of the Mediterranean and the Greater Middle East.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

Principle 1: Academic Unit Policy for Quality Assurance

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

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

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

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

The University (NKUA) considers the improvement of quality and of the Quality Assurance Policy as a continuous development process and implements procedures for recording all internal evaluation of its operations. The University's Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) was certified by the Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (HAHE) in November 2018, having been found to be in full compliance of with Hellenic Quality Assurance (HQA) Quality Standards, as well as the Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education

Area. The University's Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP) is responsible for the collection and the processing of data relating to all NKUA's academic units and administrative services.

Since 2019, the process of accrediting the University's 43 Undergraduate Programs (UGP) has begun, of which 28 have already been accredited by HAHE. The objective is to have the remaining 15 Departments, including the Department of Turkish Studies and Modern Asian Studies, accredited by the end of 2023. In this context, MODIP has been working with the Department to ensure that quality assurance and evaluation procedures are being adopted based on a detailed *NKUA IQAS Manual*, and in particular Process 4 ("Internal Evaluation").

These procedures include an evaluation of the teaching, as well as other academic functions and activities. Also, the Curriculum is meant to be systematically evaluated on a continuous basis with the full participation of students and teachers, while also taking into consideration suggestions from stakeholders. In particular, the IQAS Evaluation Priorities focus are meant to focus on checking: the content and relevance of the Curriculum against the most recent research conducted in the field, to ensure that the UGP meets contemporary standards; the overall workload of the courses, as well as student progress and course completion rates of the UGP; the students' degree of satisfaction, in relevance with their expectations of the UGP, the support and services provided, as well as the culmination of the learning environment; the individual courses offered through questionnaires addressed to the students, on a semester basis; the internal evaluation procedures, as applied by the UGP, in terms of their effectiveness and compliance with NKUA's IQAS; and the adaptation of the UGP's content and function to the ever-changing needs of society and the labour market.

Regarding the Department of Turkish Studies and Modern Asian Studies, the main instrument of the quality assurance policy of the study programme is the Internal Evaluation Team (OMEA), which works in close cooperation with the University's Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP). The overall impression of the Study Programme's Assurance Policy is that although an effort is being made to ensure that it meets quality compliance, as it is in the process to revamping its imbalanced and demanding Curriculum (67 courses in total needed in order to graduate, of which only four are electives).

The UGP currently has two study programmes in effect. The old study programme is valid for students that registered until the 2007/2008 academic year while the new study programme applies to all students registered since the 2008/2009 academic year. The study programme needs to be revamped given the top-heavy required course load. This is reflected on a yearly basis in the annual internal evaluation reports of the Department by MODIP. In particular, the study programme needs to reflect a readjustment between compulsory and elective courses to reflect the objective of at least 25% of the courses as electives. Also, there needs to be a greater effort made to create modules of related courses in the process to revamp the study program.

The participation of students in the evaluation and the reconfiguration of the study programme remains very low. On the one hand, although students are systematically provided with the requisite questionnaires to evaluate their courses, their participation is low (although the percentages have improved for the 2020/2021 academic year); the institutional processes to include students in the curriculum review process are not in place for a variety of reasons. Student input is usually provided on an ad hoc basis only. This lack of a systemic involvement of the students in the evaluation process is a concern given the fact that the Department highlights that it prioritizes "student-centred learning".

There is also no clear link between the research output and the nature of the Department in order to highlight its uniqueness as described in its evaluation proposal. Also, the links between the Department and the exigencies of the labour market are not up to par as the Panel's interaction with employers and social partners reflected the participation of the Department's students as interns rather than as employees. In fact, the Panel's impression upon its interaction with graduates reflected that the knowledge of Turkish acquired during their studies in the Department has helped many of them work in the education sector as Turkish language teachers or as translators. It was unclear how the degree acquired by Department's graduates, irrespective of the specialization route, has helped them enter the labour market beyond their acquired knowledge of Turkish.

There are also some question marks regarding how well the students have been informed regarding the academic and other services offered to them. During the meeting with students, the EEAP members were told that some students were not aware the Department's orientation days while some were not aware of many of the service-oriented services provided by the University such as the Office for Gender and Equality Issues, and the Student Housing unit. It was also unclear whether students have Academic Advisors to guide them in their studies.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Emphasize and improve the interaction with students and the information provided to them.
- Improve the process of internal monitoring of the Departments' quality assurance.
- Ensure that student representatives are institutionally/formally part of the Department's quality assurance process.

Principle 2: Design and Approval of Programmes

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

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

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

The Department of Turkish Studies and Modern Asian Studies prides itself of being the first of its kind in the history of Greek higher education since its establishment in 2003, to exclusively on this particular cognitive and cultural world. It projects itself as belonging to the study filed of "Area Studies".

The orientation of the Department is educational, research and professional. Its aim is to provide students with general and specialized knowledge, as well as the methodological-research tools for deepening the Department's offered fields of study. Its students are meant to acquire both general and specialized knowledge, as well as the necessary methodological and research tools for deepening the two individual fields of study (specialization routes): a) Turkish language and Philology and b) Historical, Social, Strategic Studies and Geopolitics of the Greater Middle East and Turkey.

The Department assures the interdisciplinary nature of its curriculum with the appointment of a qualified academic team. The Study Programme is organised according to the *European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System* (ECTS). The Programme is effectively published in the online

Student's guide with course outlines and descriptions, relevant bibliographies and expected learning outcomes.

The Study Programme's expected learning outcomes for its graduates are:

- To have developed both spoken and written Turkish comprehension and production skills at the C2 language level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR).
- To have acquired from basic to in-depth knowledge of the Ottoman language and to be able to transcribe into modern Turkish and translate Ottoman historical and literary texts into Greek.
- To have developed the metalinguistic ability to understand how the Turkish language is structured using linguistic terminology and methodology.
- To have acquired skills for preparing and implementing a Turkish teaching course, as well as creating learning outcomes, teaching modules and scenarios, potentially with the assistance of ICT.
- To have the possibility to obtain a Turkish Pedagogical and Teaching Proficiency Certificate so that its graduates can be employed in the field of teaching Turkish as a foreign language.
- To have acquired a broad view of Ottoman literature as well as modern Turkish literature.
- To have familiarized themselves with the modern theories of translation/translation studies and corpus linguistics and have acquired skills in translating various textual genres from Turkish to Greek.
- To have acquired in-depth knowledge of the most important periods of the history and the administrative, political, social, and economic structures of both the Ottoman Empire and modern Turkey.
- To have acquired the ability to critically analyse primary and secondary historical sources and texts of the Turkish context, as well as to study and evaluate the relevant literature scientifically.
- To be able to utilize basic knowledge of international law and theories of international politics in relation to Turkey.

As such, the UGP focusses on the cultivation and promotion, via teaching and research, of the literature, history, culture, political institutions and economy of Turkey and its wider neighbourhood.

The Modern Asian Studies component of the programme has not, for a variety of reasons, not been activated and/or prioritized. This creates some tension/lack of comprehension regarding why Modern Asia Studies are not cultivated.

The UGP has been enriched with availability of 4 operational Research Laboratories which cover the needs of both specialization routes.

Nevertheless, as was noted previously, the programme has not been sufficiently streamlined over the years, has not necessarily met the exigencies of the labour market, beyond the successful opportunities for internships at selected social partners.

It is also building an Erasmus/Erasmus+ network which has a long way to go to reach its full capacity and to contribute further to the Department's and the Program's internationalization.

The lack of classes offered in languages other than Greek, in particular in English, is also an issue as it hinders both the further internationalization of the program, and the quality of its content.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The creation of some classes in English needs to be encouraged. These will help both the Department's students with improving their foreign language and research skills as well as enhance the international profile of the Department.
- The Department should consider creating greater synergies with the University's Foreign Language Teaching Centre which would provide added value for the Department's students and the degree they acquire as well as enhance the profile of the Department.
- It is incumbent that the UPG becomes more flexible by increasing the percentage of mandatory elective courses, so that they correspond to approximately 25% of the total courses required to obtain a degree.
- The UPG needs to become clearer as to its correlation to the guidelines of the Department.
- The UPG needs to provide greater freedom of choice to students to specialize in the specialization routes of their interest via a rational distribution of courses (by specialization route).
- The UPG needs to greatly lighten the workload of students via a serious reduction of the number of classes the students need to take every semester.
- The UPG needs to lighten the workload of the teaching staff.
- The UPG needs to enable the relevant interconnections between research and teaching, thereby highlighting the interdisciplinary nature of the Department and its priorities.
- The UPG needs to consider the creation of cycles (modules) of courses related to relevant cognitive subjects.
- The UPG needs to consider the possibility of assigning teaching work to PhD candidates, post-doctoral researchers and staff seconded from secondary education.
- There must be a clearer correlation of course and teacher evaluations by students with their student profile.

Principle 3: Student- centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment

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

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

The student-centred learning and teaching process

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

In addition:

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

Study Programme Compliance

The UGP is an area studies programme that aims to offer interdisciplinary knowledge. It offers different courses comparing various pedagogical approaches and plurality in methods, such as traditional methods and the use of multimedia.

The professors use images, maps, charts, etc. to help the students follow the lectures/presentations and better understand the content. Students are offered regular lectures and talks by renowned scientists, as well as, in some courses, film screenings, and practical exercises to complement the theory component of teaching, while regular visits to monuments are also applied.

Regarding the Turkish language courses, although much valued by the students due to the excellent teaching methods implemented, the low percentage of attendance makes the learning environment challenging.

Students are encouraged to be engaged by making small presentations in their classes. Interviews with students have shown that they are seen as active partners in the learning process. For this purpose, laboratory research is encouraged by groups of students together with their participation in seminars, conferences, and summer schools organised by the Department. However, some social partners and possible employers commented on the fact there is still room for improvement regarding the practical skills of the graduates.

A dissertation thesis is no longer compulsory for students. The students can instead, take two in total additional compulsory elective courses. It was highlighted by the students that staff members help with internships and Erasmus mobility.

Most faculty members inform in advance the students about the evaluation criteria, the methods, and the procedures during the lectures or through open e-class platforms. The exams take place according to the law. This process includes written examinations, oral examinations, and the preparation of an assignment (individually or collectively). Special care for students nearing the completion of their studies is taken by participating in extra examination periods.

Even though student assessment is rarely carried out by more than one examiner, the transparency of the evaluation process is ensured in different ways, depending on the mode of examination. Firstly, students, if they so wish, can meet with the teachers, discuss their writing, and find out how it will be marked. Secondly, for the transparency of the examination procedure, oral examinations are conducted with the compulsory presence of more than one student. Thirdly, in courses in which the students are required to present papers, the commentary is provided by the instructor, and their fellow students actively participate in commenting on the content of the papers. When objections are submitted by students regarding their grades, the Department applies the legislation as there is a formal common procedure applicable to all Greek Universities. Usually, this is rarely implemented as it is usually primarily done informally between students and lecturers. In general, students described their experience in favourable terms with reference to mutual respect, a friendly and family environment with open dialogue between students and staff members without superfluous formalities. Students very often communicate with lecturers via e-mail, either directly or through the Open e-Class platform.

The Department follows the system of course evaluation by the students through electronic digital questionnaires. The process is carried out anonymously through the special platform of the IQAS on the University's website. The questionnaire is almost entirely based on the standard questionnaire of the HAHE, with some adaptations. The alumni have also been surveyed to acquire useful information for ameliorating the Department and its services.

A setback to the educational experience is the fact there is a low percentage of attendance in the classes. This contributes a low success in the exams which causes delays in the completion of one's studies. The rigid course curriculum with its 63 compulsory courses (out of a total of 67) was identified by students as a major contributing factor in the delay of their graduation.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The curriculum needs to be revamped with more courses to be merged rather than eliminated as they offer useful knowledge.
- More flexibility is needed in the study program with the inclusion of a much greater number of elective courses.
- More practical and technical skills need to be prioritized in order to better prepare the students to meet the exigencies of the labour market.
- The Department should consider maintaining compulsory attendance for the Turkish language classes.
- Students should be given the option of choosing their specialisation route earlier during their studies.
- Continue efforts to increase the participation rate of students in the assessments and the correlation of these assessments with student profiles.

Principle 4: Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification

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

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

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

The Department organises a welcome day upon the arrival of the new students. The members of the faculty led by the head of the department present them with detailed information about the program and the university with a view to facilitating their orientation. The students are provided with information regarding the course structure (e.g. core and specialization courses, mandatory and elective courses, and pedagogy courses) and the available tracks (e.g. Turkish Language and Philology and Historical, Social and Strategic Studies and Geopolitics) that they can choose after their second year of study. The students are also familiarised with the facilities of the Department as well as those of the University. These include the research laboratories of the Department, the relevant Faculty library, and other relevant units of the University. The new students are also informed through the department's website and in-class announcements about the Erasmus opportunities and postgraduate possibilities. The Department employs electronic secretarial services (mystudies.uoa.gr) for students and teachers. Students' progression is monitored through data provided annually by the Department Secretariat and recorded in the annual Internal Evaluation Reports.

The Department encourages students' mobility through the partnerships that it has signed with universities in Europe and Turkey. The study of the Turkish language like any other language benefits a great deal from direct exposition to the native-speaking environment. Therefore, the department has signed exchange agreements with ten (10) partner universities in Turkey in addition to one (1) in Germany and one (1) in Bulgaria. The information about the exchange programs is provided to students through the Study Guide and also on the website of the Department. The Department's ERASMUS academic officer stated that he shares with the students the information regarding conditions for participation and the selection criteria. On the Department's website, there is a separate electronic link that refers to relevant information and documents from the ERASMUS Office of the University. The ECTS system is applied across the curriculum, and the University does provide students with a Diploma Supplement issued upon graduation. The Department implements the Credit Transfer System (ECTS). For one

semester of study at a university abroad, the student can receive up to 30 credits. As for the issue of internship, during the Panel's meeting with the students, the students highlighted the importance to participate in internships in the public and private sector.

The department offers the students the option of writing a bachelor's thesis in their senior year. The students who choose to write a thesis take two courses that bear the title "Graduate Thesis Courses". The Regulation for the Preparation of a Graduate Thesis states the details for the process of selection, development, supervision, and support of the graduate thesis. Thematic fields for the Graduate Thesis are determined by the lecturers in advance (not in collaboration with the students) and are announced at the end of the 6th semester.

Students in the meeting with the Panel remarked that the Department administration should more effectively inform the students about these two study tracks and provide them with some guidelines on the website of the department as to how to obtain further information about the Department's course structure and other technical matters pertinent to their studies.

The Department could implement the practice of academic advisors who assist students with their academic and career plans during their studies. Given the size of the Department, academic advising could be formally adopted to effectively monitor the progress of students and promptly inform them of the Exchange, Internship, and other opportunities relevant to their areas of interest.

Although the University has a very informative Erasmus (+) Office, where students who are interested can visit and attain further information for Erasmus (+) Programmes, the Department should employ more effective strategies to publicize information about these programmes.

It should be added that the Department does not offer any courses in English. This might be an inhibiting factor explaining the limited number of incoming Erasmus students.

The students who took the thesis option spoke very highly of the supervision and support they received from their professors. It was also voiced by one of the professors that more students should choose this option as it allows them to extend their specialization and focus on a certain topic while enhancing their ability to do scientific research. It would also allow them to properly learn how to write a scientific work, following all the rules of scientific writing, implementing a clear research method, conducting literature search and evaluation, developing a scientific argument while critically considering their research topic.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Students in the meeting with the Panel remarked that the Department administration should more effectively inform the students about these two study tracks and provide them with some guidelines on the website of the department as to how to obtain further information about the Department's course structure and other technical matters pertinent to their studies.
- Given that some students work and cannot attend the departmental orientation meetings, the Department should make this type of crucial information available to the entire cohort via e-mail.
- The Department should also update and reorganize the Department's website.
- The Department should institutionalise the practice of academic advisors who assist students with their academic and career plans during their studies. Given the size of the Department, academic advising could be formally adopted to effectively monitor the progress of students and promptly inform them of the Exchange, Internship and other opportunities relevant to their areas of interest.
- The Department should employ more effective strategies to publicize information about the Erasmus (+) programmes.
- The Panel feels that the Department should offer English-language courses and have them open to its own students, as part of the electives.
- It is recommended that the Department should encourage more students to take the option of writing a thesis and give them also the opportunity to suggest their own topic of research.
- The Panel recommends that a clear evaluation matrix of the thesis should be developed and shared with the students in order to ensure transparency.
- It is also recommended that the Department builds a database with all the theses that have been completed by now.

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

Study Programme Compliance

The Department consists of the following faculty members recruited through a clear, transparent, and fair process: eleven (11) professors and lecturers; one (1) professor emeritus; two (2) visiting faculty members from other departments/universities; one (1) special teaching staff member (EEP); one (1) laboratory teaching staff member (EDIP); one (1) special technical and laboratory staff member (ETEP); and eight (8) contracted university teachers (for the Fall 2022/2023 semester).

The Department's administrative and technical staff number four (4) persons.

They have been selected according to the two major tracks of the department in Turkish language and philology and Historical, Social and Strategic Studies and Geopolitics. The Department also has adjunct teaching staff consisting of Ph.D. holders who are active researchers and scholars but do not hold permanent positions.

The Department operates through a curriculum with a sizeable number of courses on Turkish language and philology. Accordingly, language teaching is one of the priorities of the department, which is not correspondingly represented in the number of faculty members specialized in this area. Both the lecturers and tenured faculty in charge of teaching Turkish/Ottoman language and philology had high qualifications and enthusiasm for their positions. This view was corroborated with the views of the students who participated in the site meeting with the Panel members as well as those of the graduates whom the panel met online. The faculty members specialized in the Historical, Social and Strategic Studies and Geopolitics presented the panel with sufficient information about their areas of expertise,

research, and teaching activities, and discussed the possibilities to enhance the quality of classroom teaching and research output.

The teaching staff employ innovative and commonly used pedagogical practices and teaching methods that comply with international standards. There is enthusiasm and skills in utilizing new technologies, both in the classroom and in interaction among faculty and students. The language teachers (Turkish and Ottoman) provided extensive information about their in-class activities and the material they use in their classes. One teacher shared with the Panel members the whole package of handouts and exams prepared specifically for the courses, which demonstrates the amount of time and effort put into it. The Panel had the opportunity to interact with some current students and graduates who expressed their views as to how much they benefited from their classroom as well as personal interactions with the teaching staff. All of them spoke very highly of their professors, the departmental culture, and the learning environment. Many uttered the word “family” when characterizing the atmosphere in the department. They all confirmed that their teachers are committed, mostly accessible, understanding, and ready to provide support and guidance.

The teaching workload of the faculty members is 9 hours on average per week, which is appropriate for the members who teach courses in history, politics, literature, translation, and geo-strategy. The workload is higher for the language teachers due to their limited number. Although the Department employs lecturers on part-time and short-term contracts to conduct these classes, the fact that the students opt mostly for the language and philology track after their second year of study, there is more demand for language courses and accordingly language teachers.

The teaching staff is regularly evaluated by the students through surveys. But participation in these surveys has been generally low owing to the fact that these surveys are conducted online, and most students are not properly informed about their availability. Given that a great number of students work and that they do not see this task as a requirement, they tend not to fill out those surveys. The Panel was informed during the meeting with the current students that the students prefer discussing matters of performance and quality with their teachers at the end of the semester in class and sometimes in their offices.

Both the Department and the University provide encouragement and offer conditions conducive to the professional development of the faculty, although there is still much room for improvement. Despite the obstacles and difficulties associated mostly with the shortage of teaching, technical and secretarial staff, the members of the Faculty should be appraised for their unwavering commitment and effort in maintaining high-quality teaching. It should be stated that there is a collaborative climate within the Department, reflecting mutual respect and collegial spirit.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The “family” atmosphere in the Department and the faculty availability to the students should be maintained as it is instrumental in sharing experiences, getting feedback, and making adjustments.
- The Department should be provided with staff assistance to take care of ICT-related tasks as those matters are currently handled by a faculty member whose teaching and research are unfavourably affected by it. Given the growing importance of ICT for teaching, this situation will become much more difficult to manage by a faculty member.
- The Department should be allocated more positions to facilitate language teaching. The workload of the Turkish-language teachers appears to be overwhelming and should be reduced with the recruitment of new staff.
- The course surveys should be more effectively implemented. To this effect, the faculty members should discuss strategies to increase the number of participants in these surveys. One method already discussed is to make participation in the survey as a prerequisite to learn the final grade.
- Staff mobility is one of the areas that need improvement. More faculty members should be encouraged to take advantage of Erasmus+ mobility opportunities.
- Faculty members must intensify their efforts to increase their research output as well as publicizing it in order to improve the visibility of the Department. They should publish in international peer-reviewed journals and publishing houses.
- The Department and the University could seek ways and means to provide further support to faculty members to enhance research and intensify their efforts for attracting external funding, especially through international and European projects. This would meet the broader challenges which universities and departments are facing, such as attracting and retaining more faculty of international calibre.

Principle 6: Learning Resources and Student Support

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

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

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

The Department has recently moved to the building at Dragatsanios Street, where two floors house the Secretariat, the four Laboratories, the lecturers' offices, an up-to-date computers room, as well as a few small classrooms which are mainly used for courses of the Postgraduate Studies Programs. In the building at Aeolou Street and Kolokotroni Street, on the 5th and 6 floors, there is the library shared by all the Departments of the School of Economics and Political Science while most of the teaching halls equipped with appropriate technology are located in a shared building with other three departments (including the Law Faculty) on Solonos Street. Although all three aforementioned buildings are located in the centre of Athens, they complicate the work of both students and their instructors.

The Library houses relevant books concerning the disciplines of the department. Nevertheless, it is obvious that even though an open-access catalogue is available, the electronic scientific documentation resources could be enhanced, and the students' use of library resources should be strengthened, while the collection could be enriched.

The staff (teachers, administrative support, librarians) tries to cope as much as possible and offer to the students the best possible start in their academic course, albeit the heavy workload. For example, the operation of the research labs is side-lined as a result. Furthermore, the IT sector of the Department could use a helping hand as one professor is responsible for it on top of teaching and research responsibilities.

The communication with students is done either electronically (by email) or in person, within prescribed hours weekly. Four teaching staff members serve informally as advisors to the students. One professor is responsible to assist students with disabilities by working closely with the Accessibility Unit of the University.

Many services are available to the students by the University of Athens. These include the Office of the Student Advocate, the Office for Gender and Equality Issues, and the Student Housing unit of the University of Athens, but students are not always updated on the support services. This needs to be improved. There is wide availability and use of electronic services by the University, such as online registration, online courses, textbook registration, online progress monitoring, as well as the eLearning Platform e-Class. Several other IT tools and services are available to the students that enhance teaching and learning including MS Teams, Skype, webmail, Academic ID, and e-class.

The Panel is under the impression that a lack of funding along with the red tape prohibit some reforms that would ameliorate the quality of the education offered.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Improve the content of the library's services and generate further funding to enrich its collection.
- Organize more orientation days, open days, and career events.

Principle 7: Information Management

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

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

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

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

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

The Department's presentation focused more on its history and philosophical orientation rather than on specific operational data and information, although it did provide some data when asked by the Panel. The Department relies on the University's data collection services, and these are relatively well operational. Both MODIP and OMEA have the ability to mine data and for the most part that is happening. The Department has a relative grasp on the number of students enrolled per year, and the number of active students. The same applies to data related to student satisfaction with the programme.

For the students' academic progress and records, the Department relies on the University's electronic platform, which is a university-wide service.

For the electronic teaching platform, the Department relies on e-Class and that also works as well as can be.

The information obtained from the satisfaction surveys seems to be systematically analysed and used towards improvement.

In general terms, the data on academic and administrative functions are compiled and are available, but not always readily so.

Given the fact that the Department possesses a 4-person strong technical and administrative staff, the Panel feels that the mined data could be better collected, presented in graphs, and made available on the Department's website.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The Department should make greater use of data to implement academic policies already in place.
- Policy making and implementation should be data driven.
- Surveys can be administered to student to gauge their preferences in curricular construction, especially as the next major revision of the curriculum is underway.

Principle 8: Public Information

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

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

The Department provides through its website useful information about the structure of the Undergraduate Program, the degree awarded, the teaching staff's CVs, lecturers' office hours, course descriptions, etc. Also, information about the additional higher education or vocational training programs (Erasmus+, CIVIS, Internship) in which students of the Department can participate can be found. The scientific and research projects carried out under the responsibility of the faculty members of the Department are presented. All scientific events organized by the Department and its members, sometimes in collaboration with other institutions, are announced on the Department's website. The laboratories have websites to promote and publicize their results, achievements, and services offered. Data and links on centralized support from the University are found on the Department's website.

Students have the opportunity to be informed mainly through the open e-Class platform and most of the students suggest that most lecturers post on the platform updated information such as documents, scoreboards, assignments, course calendars, user groups, questionnaires, and multimedia.

Data and results from the Quality Assurance Policy process, for example, internal evaluation reports are not available online for recent years and only older data has been uploaded. Questionnaires for undergraduate students as well as for alumni with preliminary statistical processing of responses are available.

The website is comprehensive but not sufficiently user-friendly or always up to date. Some information is pending and not all information found on the Greek-language website can be found in the English-language website. Consequently, not all the students are aware of any updated information and the activities regarding the Department due to this fact. This dysfunction is mainly due to the inability to migrate to a new website and remove the current one which is not updated, since the requisite technical support for a new website not currently available. In fact, a faculty member is in charge is responsible for the updating and the maintenance of the website.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The website needs to be updated and revamped.
- More detailed information needs to be provided on the website.

Principle 9: On-going Monitoring and Periodic Internal Review of Programmes
INSTITUTIONS SHOULD HAVE IN PLACE AN INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM FOR THE AUDIT AND ANNUAL INTERNAL REVIEW OF THEIR PROGRAMMES, SO AS TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVES SET FOR THEM, THROUGH MONITORING AND AMENDMENTS, WITH A VIEW TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT. ANY ACTIONS TAKEN IN THE ABOVE CONTEXT SHOULD BE COMMUNICATED TO ALL PARTIES CONCERNED.

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

The above comprise the evaluation of:

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

During the site visit, the Panel was informed about the update of the programme to cope with the (inter)national quality assurance criteria. The internal review of the programme is the means used to trace challenges and suggest improvement of actions plans. The Department submitted a report from the (last) internal review in 2020 (no further reports were initially submitted). It reports that it was based on an earlier review that “covers a period up to 2017/2018”. The (Greek) webpage of the Department refers only to sporadic internal reviews of different periods that do not exceed 2014. It was not clear whether any review processes took place during the period between 2018-2020 (and after). The Panel was wondering about the relevance of using the findings of 2017-2018 for the 2020 review, if a more updated review took place in 2019. The chair of the Panel addressed the MODIP unit and the head of the Department to clarify and provide further information and eventually send any (missed) annual reviews in case they are available. The committee received later two (unsigned) documents with internal reviews, supposed to have taken place in 2019-2020 and 2020-2021, dated in 28/01/2021 and 20/12/2021 respectively. MODIP reported that the 2021-2022 assessment is awaiting ratification and could not yet be shared. Based on the submitted and later provided documentation, the committee is accordingly willing to believe that internal reviews take place annually/regularly.

The outcomes of the self-assessment are properly recorded and submitted to MODIP. An action plan is set up with clear due dates and specific executive responsibilities. To the best of the knowledge of the Panel, (some) students were not properly informed about the findings and/or engaged in the decision making and action process. Nevertheless, the staff members as well as the students are well aware of the challenge of active student-engagement in the different assessment and improvement processes of the Department.

The Department is striving to implement a considerable number of the planned actions related to the self-assessment. It is remarkable that the findings in the three internal reviews that was made available to the Panel reflect mostly the same findings and trace the same challenges. By far, the Panel is convinced that some exigent necessary steps could have been taken, even gradually, to improve some salient weakness points in the earlier reports (e.g. reducing the number of required courses for graduation, understaffing, involvement of PhD candidates and external staff in teaching tasks, revision and amendment of the study programme). During the site visit interviews it was clear that the implementation process was/is burdened with institutional and financial problems, add to this the intervening Covid-19 period. However, some aspects from the 2017-2018 assessment required direct actions, especially the revision of the number of courses required to graduate, increase student-evaluations and engagement in decision making.

There is a consensus among the Panel members that the site visit of the institute was of great value for the process of assessment compared to the information the submitted documentation could offer. The Panel considers the fact that the submitted accreditation request goes back to May 2020. However, the visit included a wide array of updated information that enriched the view of the Panel members (presentations, Q/A sessions, interviews with staff members, administrative and evaluative staff, alumni/students, and stakeholders). The Panel was well informed about reflective and procedural good practices - based on self-evaluation, the 2014 external assessment and internal reviews - relevant to the SWOT analysis and steps taken toward the improvement of different weakness points of the Department and the UGP. The gap between what was available on paper and the insights gained through the site visit was vast.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- It is highly recommended that the Department provides as much as updated documentation related to every assessment and review process, update the webpages regularly, as this forms the substantial information to be utilized for any (initial) assessment (especially when some Panel members are given the choice to participate online), let alone the visibility at national and international levels.
- It is also recommended to make the documentation concerning annual reviews available on the website and accessible to students and stakeholders for feedback and suggestions.
- The action plan deems further consideration and compact implementation policy on macro- and micro levels. A shared-published strategic plan of the department with mission, vision, short/long term action points and a measurable SMART-plan with annual evaluation of the achieved goals at the end of each academic year would be more efficient.

Principle 10: Regular External Evaluation of Undergraduate Programmes

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

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

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

The most recent external evaluation was administered by the Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency (HQA) in 2014. The Panel is not aware of any further external evaluation by the HAHE since 2014. The staff members are remarkably conscious of the importance and the eventual contribution of an external review to the improvement of the different aspects of the study programme. As a relatively new academic unit, the Department team shows a high level of commitment to achieve important developments toward the realization of core recommendations of quality assurance reports, wherever feasible, amid economically challenging times, non-favourable legal-institutional frameworks and inadequate physical accommodation. While the infrastructure and physical facilities problems was one of the major observations of the 2014 report, the Department underlines the fact that until January 2019, the staff members had no offices, and the main educational activities and secretariat tasks were carried out in an extremely inadequate building for educational goals. The Panel is impressed by the resilience, devotion, and teamwork spirit of the staff members to overcome difficulties and safeguard the sustainability of the study programme.

Students-oriented curriculum improvements were enhanced. Stakeholders seem to be actively involved in the review process (although the input of the students is only informal). As far as the follow-up actions are concerned, the Department is committed to engage different stakeholders in action plans, especially in regard to the practical training of the students. The research-centred thematic laboratories were further developed to support a proper integration of research activities in the educational process and strengthen the research output of the Department. The curriculum underwent some qualitative improvements while efforts are underway to reconstruct it to meet the planned targets and keep it coherent and compliant with national and international standards. Two post-graduate programs (although only one is currently operational) were developed to meet the ambitions of the alumni and interested students to continue their study in fields correlated to the two main trajectories of the

undergraduate program. Considerable steps have been taken to guarantee a higher degree of consistent and efficient extroversion. The committee expresses its appreciation of this endeavour of the Department so far to cope with the challenges ahead and implement improvement plans.

The Panel however opines that the scope of compliance with recommendations in the previous external evaluation process remains limited. As mentioned above in Principle 9, certain prioritised and imperative recommendations should have been realised. A telling example is the repetitively enduring required action to reduce the number of compulsory courses necessary for graduation. In the 2014 report, the number of courses for graduation was 62 (58 compulsory). In the current programme the number has increased to 67 (63 compulsory and 4 compulsory elective courses). Moreover, the persistent problem of the low number of student evaluations and active involvement in decision making processes is regularly repeated in internal review reports. The Department is willing and planning to take actions, but this should be achieved within a specific timespan; creative and decisive solutions should be implemented with guidance and support from the relevant technical, pedagogical, and administrative services of both the Faculty and the University.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The Panel recommends more transparency, visibility and availability in sharing assessment reports and reviews with different stakeholders and students promoting feedback and suggestive attitudes.
- It is also recommended to implement insistent actions directly and determinedly with special consideration to those related to the curriculum, study- and workload of both students and staff, enhancement of the students and stakeholders' engagement in the different evaluation and feedback processes.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

- There is a general willingness by the Department's Faculty to work together and revamp the Programme to meet the exigencies and expectations of the University, the student body and the disciplines it encompasses.
- The Department has been generally diligent in its preparation of all relevant documentation pertaining to the Quality Assurance Process.
- The University and its relevant units, MODIP, have been efficient in guiding the Department in preparing for the Process.
- The perceived collegial atmosphere between most of the Department's teaching staff, its administrators, and its students should be commended.

II. Areas of Weakness

- The Study Programme has not been considerably revamped and updated. The process of revising the study programme has only begun relatively recently, while this has been repeatedly one of the core recommendations of the internal evaluation process.
- The internationalisation of the Department could be improved.
- The Erasmus+ programme is not up to par. This also applies to motivation students and staff to take part in Erasmus+ exchanges.
- There are no classes offered in English.
- The number of student evaluations is very low.
- Lack of formal student advising mechanism.
- The physical infrastructure is not ideal.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- Improve the process of internal monitoring of the Department's quality assurance.
- Emphasize and improve the interaction with students and the information provided to them. Ensure that student representatives are institutionally/formally part of the Department's quality assurance process.
- The Panel recommends more transparency, visibility and availability in sharing assessment reports and reviews with different stakeholders and students promoting feedback and suggestive attitudes.
- It is also recommended to, directly and determinedly, implement insistent actions especially those related to the curriculum, study- and workload of both students and staff, enhancement of the students and stakeholder engagement in the different evaluation and feedback processes.
- The creation of some classes in English needs to be encouraged. These will help both the Department's students with improving their foreign language and research skills as well as enhance the international profile of the Department.

- It is incumbent that the UPG becomes more flexible by increasing the percentage of mandatory elective courses, so that they correspond to approximately 25% of the total courses required to obtain a degree.
- The UPG needs to enable the relevant interconnections between research and teaching, thereby highlighting the interdisciplinary nature of the Department and its priorities.
- Faculty members must intensify their efforts to increase their research output as well as publicizing it in order to improve the visibility of the Department. They should publish in international peer-reviewed journals and publishing houses.
- More practical and technical skills need to be prioritized in order to better prepare the students to meet the exigencies of the labour market.
- Continue efforts to increase the participation rate of students in the assessments and the correlation of these assessments with student profiles.
- The Department should institutionalize the practice of academic advisors who assist students with their academic and career plans during their studies. Given the size of the Department, academic advising could be formally adopted to effectively monitor the progress of students and promptly inform them of the Exchange, Internship and other opportunities relevant to their areas of interest.
- The Department should employ more effective strategies to publicize information about the Erasmus (+) programmes.
- It is recommended that the Department should encourage more students to take the option of writing a thesis and give them also the opportunity to suggest their own topic of research.
- The Panel recommends that a clear evaluation matrix of the thesis should be developed and shared with the students in order to ensure transparency.
- The Department should be provided with staff assistance to take care of ICT-related tasks as those matters are currently handled by a faculty member whose teaching and research are unfavourably affected by it. Given the growing importance of ICT for teaching, this situation will become much more difficult to manage by a faculty member.
- The Department should be allocated more positions to facilitate language teaching. The workload of the Turkish-language teachers appears to be overwhelming and should be reduced with the recruitment of new staff.
- The course surveys should be more effectively implemented. To this effect, the faculty members should discuss strategies to increase the number of participants in these surveys. One method already discussed is to make participation in the survey as a prerequisite to learn the final grade.
- Staff mobility is one of the areas that need improvement. More faculty members should be encouraged to take advantage of Erasmus+ mobility opportunities.
- The Department should make greater use of data to implement academic policies already in place.
- The website needs to be updated and revamped. More detailed information needs to be provided on the website.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: **4, 6, 7, and 10.**

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **1, 2, 3, 5, 8, and 9.**

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	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname

Signature

- 1. Professor Dimitrios Triantaphyllou (Chair)**
Kadir Has University, Istanbul, Turkey
- 2. Professor Yaser Ellethy**
VU-Amsterdam, Amsterdam, Netherlands
- 3. Professor Onur Yildirim**
Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey
- 4. Ms. Maria Rachil Mpiutu, Student**
Department of Balkan, Slavic & Oriental Studies, University of Macedonia, Thessaloniki, Greece