ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
HELLENIC REPUBLIC

Accreditation Report

for the Undergraduate Study Programme of:

Educational and Social Policy
Institution: University of Macedonia
Date: 19 June 2021

Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the Undergraduate Study Programme of **Educational and Social Policy** of the **University of Macedonia** for the purposes of granting accreditation

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PART A: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW

I.   The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the Undergraduate Study Programme of **Educational and Social Policy** of the **University of Macedonia** comprised the following three (3) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

1.   **Professor Nicos Trimikliniotis (Chair)**
       University of Nicosia, Cyprus

2.   **Professor Marcie Boucouvalas,**
       Virginia Tech, United States of America

3.   **Professor Costas Spirou**
       Georgia College & State University, United States of America

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

The external review, consisting of the three panellists that make up the EEAP, took place between 14/06/2021 – 19/06/2021 via teleconference, as the COVID-19 pandemic did not allow for an on-site visit. The following teleconference meetings with all relevant persons took place:

Monday, 14/06/2021
EEAP members met privately to exchange ideas and allocate tasks.

Teleconference with the Vice- Rector/President of MODIP & the Head of the Department, Rector & Head of the Department
- Professor Stylianos D. Katranidis, Rector
- Professor Konstantinos Papadopoulos, Head of the Educational & Social Policy (ESP) Department

Teleconference with OMEA & MODIP representatives, OMEA and MODIP members, MODIP staff
- Professor Konstantinos Papadopoulos, Head of the Educational & Social Policy (ESP) Department
- Associate Professor Nikolaos Fachantidis, vice- Head of the ESP Department
- Professor Maria Platsidou
- Assistant Professor Vassiliki Giannouli

MODIP members
- Professor Dimitrios Kyrkilis
- Assistant Professor Eleni Kallimopoulou

MODIP staff
- Ioanna Danassi

Tuesday, 15/06/2021
Teleconference with teaching staff members
1. Professor Agaliotis Ioannis
2. Professor Valkanos Efthymios
3. Professor Montgomery Anthony Jude
4. Professor Okalidou Areti
5. Professor Triarhou Lazaros
6. Associate Professor Gouleta Eirini
7. Associate Professor Kartasidou Lefkothea

8. Associate Professor Papavassiliou Ioanna
9. Associate Professor Proios Chariklia
10. Associate Professor Syriopoulou- Delli Christine
11. Assistant Professor Varsamis Panagiotis
12. Assistant Professor Koustriava Eleni
13. Assistant Professor Papakonstantinou Doxa
14. Assistant Professor Stampoulis Miltiadis

Teleconference with EEAP and Students

1. SA, 1st year
2. SB, 1st year
3. SC, 2nd year
4. SD, 2nd year
5. SE, 3rd year
6. SF, 3rd year
7. SG, 4th year
8. SH, 4th year
9. SI , 4th year
10. SK, 4th year

On- line tour: classrooms, lecture halls, libraries laboratories, and other facilities /Discussion about the facilities presented in the video produced for this purpose (administrative staff members and teaching staff members)[1]:

1. Associate Professor Nikolaos Fachantidis, Vice-Head of the Department Administrative staff members
2. Papanikolaou Evdoxia, Senior administrator
3. Efstathiou Aikaterini, Secretary staff
4. Valavanidis Georgios, Secretary staff
5. Papadopoulos Athanasios, Secretarial staff

Teaching staff members (ΕΔΙΠ)

1. Karatsiori Marianthi
2. Lefkos Ioannis
3. Pampouri Anastasia

Teleconference with Programme graduates

1. G1, Special education teacher in public primary education
2. G2
3. G3, Special education teacher in private sector
4. G4

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[1] On- line tour (*Εικονική Περιήγηση 360ο στο Πανεπιστήμιο Μακεδονίας | Πανεπιστήμιο Μακεδονίας (uom.gr)*

5. G5
6. G6
7. G7
8. G8
9. G9
10. G10

Teleconference with social partners and employers

1. Vassara Maro, Psychologist, Deputy Head, Department of Social Protection (from Municipality of Neapolis- Sykeon - Thessaloniki)
2. Anna Papachristou, Psychologist, The Down Syndrome Association of Greece
3. G . Marinos, Principal of the 1st Primary School in Thermi
4. K. Notas, Principal of the Special Education Primary School Pefkon (Thessaloniki)
5. Vergos Evangelos, Principal of the Vocational High School, American Farm School, Thessaloniki
6. Virginia Politi, Head of the Department of Support & Integration of Immigrants and Refugees, Municipality of Thessaloniki.
7. Filothei Matsigou, Global Learning and Development Manager, Trivium Packaging (The Netherlands)
8. Victoria Alamisi, Department of Training and Human Resources Development, Diamantis Massoutis S.A. (Supermarket)

Wednesday, 16/06/2021

Teleconference with OMEA & MODIP representatives, OMEA and MODIP members, MODIP staff

- Professor Stylianos D. Katranidis, Rector
- Professor Konstantinos Papadopoulos, Head of the Educational & Social Policy (ESP) Department
- Associate Professor Nikolaos Fachantidis, Vice-Head of the ESP Department
- Professor Maria Platsidou
- Assistant Professor Vassiliki Giannouli MODIP members

- Prof. Dimitrios Kyrkilis
- Assistant Professor Eleni Kallimopoulou
- Ioanna Danassi

Closure with the Vice- Rector/President of MODIP, the Head of the Department, OMEA and MODIP, Rector, Head of the Department, OMEA & MODIP members, MODIP

- Vice-Rector Prof. Dimitrios Kyrkilis
- Head of the Department, Professor Konstantinos Papadopoulos OMEA
- Associate Professor Nikolaos Fachantidis, Vice- Head of the ESP Department
- Professor Maria Platsidou
- Assistant Professor Vassiliki Giannouli
- Assistant Professor Eleni Kallimopoulou
- Ioanna Danassi

The members of the EEAP studied extensively all the documents provided as well as documents and material from the UAM website. After the meetings, the EEAP members drafted the report and met repeatedly via teleconference from Wednesday 16/06/2021 through Saturday 19/06/2021 when the report was completed.

It was unfortunate as the EEAP panel was unable to have physical contact to meet face-to-face with the faculty and stakeholders to properly engage and get a feel for the physical place and the space in context.

Notwithstanding this drawback, an excellent sense of the issues was grasped as a result of the best efforts by all the persons interviewed who made up for the absence of physical contact, from the Rector himself, who was present in the first and the last session, to the leadership of the Department, the students, the graduates and stakeholders.

The presentations made were well-prepared and comprehensive, the discussions were thorough, and the information provided responded to the questions the EEAP asked. Overall, the honest exchanges between the EEAP panel and the persons interviewed (listed above) demonstrated to EEAP that there is a strong commitment and care about the academic and community the Department offers. Moreover, impressive was the hospitable and welcoming spirit, inviting the EEAP panel to locate the weaknesses and challenges for the purpose of improvement and address potential accessibility or other barriers on the path to academic excellence.

Documents examined

- Study Regulations (Κανονισμός Σπουδών https://www.uom.gr/esp/kanonismos-spoydon)
- Study Guide (Οδηγός Σπουδών https://www.uom.gr/esp/odhgos-spoydon)

- Study Program (Πρόγραμμα Σπουδών https://www.uom.gr/esp/programma-spoydon
- Practicum Guide (Οδηγός Πρακτικής Άσκησης https://www.uom.gr/esp/odhgos-praktikhs- askhshs)
- Timetable Teaching Program (Ωρολόγιο Πρόγραμμα Διδασκαλίας[2])
- Scientific publications (https://www.uom.gr/esp/syggrammata)
- Certification of Pedagogical Competence – Application (Πιστοποίηση Παιδαγωγικής Επάρκειας - Αίτηση https://www.uom.gr/esp/pistopoihsh-paidagogikhs-eparkeias-aithsh)
- External Evaluation Report (2013)[3]

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[2] *https://www.uom.gr/esp/orologio-programma-didaskalias*
[3] *EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL POLICY, UNIVERSITY OF MACEDONIA, 29 November 2013. The Committee was constituted by the following: Prof. Andreas Demetriou (University of Cyprus, Chair), Prof. Andreas Kalyvas (The New School) and Prof. Athryn A. Kozaitis (Georgia State University).*

III. Study Programme Profile

The undergraduate degree of the Department of Educational and Social Policy (herein referred to as "the Department") started in September 1997 when the first students were admitted. Since then, it grants a single degree, which is determined by the pathways:

(a) Pathway of Continuing Education (Κατεύθυνση Συνεχούς Εκπαίδευσης)

(b) Pathway of Education of People with Special Needs (Κατεύθυνση Εκπαίδευσης Ατόμων με Ειδικές Ανάγκες)

The last similar review took place in 2013, when the External Evaluation Report (2013) made specific recommendations[3]. The 2013 Report is illuminating, as it allowed the EEAP to have useful benchmarks to examine the steps taken to address the weakness and to record the effortsand progress made since then.

For the year 2019-2020 the Department had registered in total 975 students out of whom 284 are first year students. The Department enjoys a high average standard steadily rising since 2015.

Moreover, the Department currently enjoys the highest entry marks in comparison to equivalent Department in other national universities, as shown in the graph below.[4]
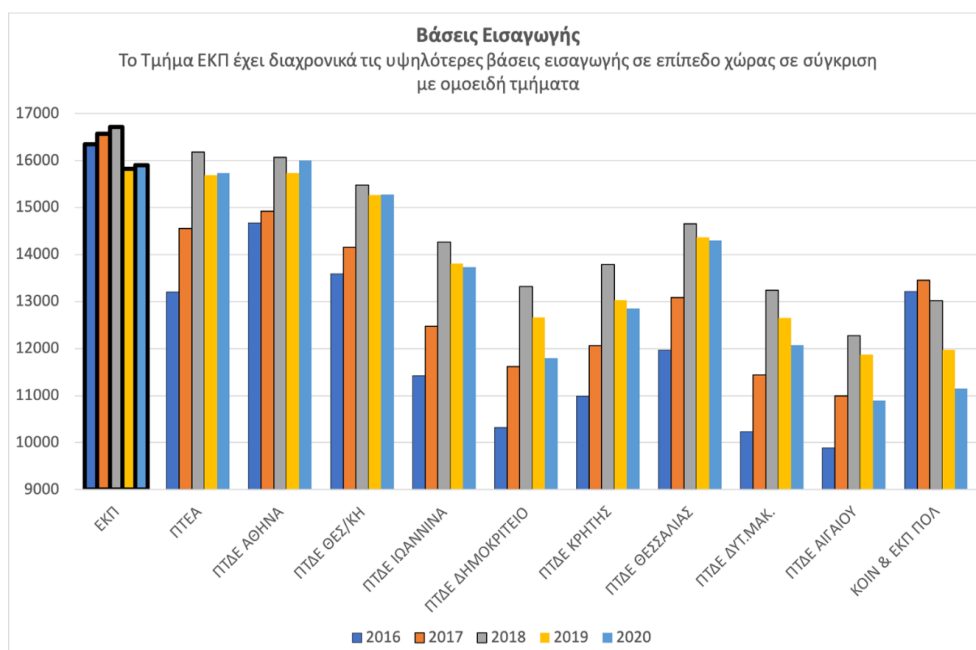
There are 18 faculty members in permanent posts, 6 Laboratory Teaching Personnel, 2 Special Technical Lab Personnel, 4 members of the Administrative Staff, 8 Special Teaching Staff. About 55% are women and 45% men.

[3] *EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT, DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL AND SOCIAL POLICY, UNIVERSITY OF MACEDONIA, 29 November 2013.*

[4] *PowerPoint presented by Professor Maria Platsidou at the Teleconference with OMEA & MODIPrepresentatives on Monday, 14/06/2021*

The *staff (permanent faculty) / student ratio* is 1:54; in 2013 it was 1:55.5.

Students who choose the pathway of Education for People with Special Needs (Κατεύθυνσης Εκπαίδευσης Ατόμων με Ειδικές Ανάγκες) are employed in the public sector, in General and Special Education units of Primary and Secondary Education. However, students who choose the direction of Continuing Education (Κατεύθυνση Συνεχιζόμενης Εκπαίδευσης) are generally absorbed by the private sector in businesses for Adult Education and Lifelong Learning, and only a small fraction in state organizations. About 90% choose the pathway of Education for People with Special Needs as it provides for more secure employment opportunities.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

Principle 1: Academic Unit Policy for Quality Assurance

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

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

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

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

The Educational and Social Policy Program of the University of Macedonia has written and adopted a clear and comprehensive Quality Assurance Policy consistent with the overall Quality Strategy of the University of Macedonia. Two majors are offered in the Department:

a) Continuing Education (Lifelong Learning and Adult Education), and
b) Education specializing in Disabilities and Special Needs.

The complementarity of these two majors in one program bodes well for addressing many special populations as well such as the most vulnerable in society. Both majors are of criticalsignificance to society, as the interviewees were well aware.

All those with whom we met and interviewed seemed keenly aware of the greater world (local, national, and international) of which the Department was part (e.g., broad disciplinary scope of the Social Sciences as well as complementary strides in other parts of Greece and the globe with regard to the majors offered). Some seem internationally networked as well in such domains. In addition, repeatedly we heard refrains of awareness of the rapidly changing environment in which we all navigate professionally as well as personally, that leads them to continuous review for improvement and informs their decision-making processes. Finally, as a strongly cohesive group, individually and collectively, they evidenced robust resilience with regard to the ability to live with uncertainty, all of which provides a strong role model for students and for continuous improvement of the program. Perhaps due to the nature of the majors they serve and the student populations that choose such majors, we witnessed a strong ethos of social sensitivity and inclusivity in thinking that could possibly also serve as a role model for others in the University and greater community.

The Quality Assurance policy clearly articulates, in addition to the goals of the Department, the following:

Intended objectives of the Quality Assurance Policy

1. Demonstrate a well-Informed factual account of the Department's academic, scientific and social activities.
2. Monitor and refine services offered to the entirety of the Institution's academic community by Department Members, be they teaching, research, technical and administrative personnel.
3. Identify areas in need of improvement and specifying reparative course of action.

Target outcomes stemming from the Quality Policy

1. High quality of studies into foundational and applied disciplinary knowledge specific to the field of the Department (in compliance with the European and National Qualifications Framework), embedded in the spirit of humanism and solidarity especially towards target populations in need of special education and adult education expert pedagogical services.
2. High quality educational process in the context of a student-centred approach ultimately looking to empower the students' successful transition to the labour market.
3. Customization of the educational process and field-of-study content to the specifications of the ever-changing scientific landscape of Special Education and Adult Education.
4. High quality research, its dissemination to the community and society alike, followed by its impact assessment.

Objectives toward meeting the Quality Policy targets and outcomes

1. Academic focus-on-quality, active student participation in scientific, research and social actions led by the Department.
2. Compulsory student internship in Special Education School Units and Adult Education sectors.
3. Program customization to the latest findings related to either one or both specializations of the Department and subsequent curricular course supplements.
4. Academic publications of the Department faculty, in distinguished Greek and global

scientific journals as well as encouragement of student participation, mainly postgraduate and doctoral, in conferences and student involvement in research projects encouraged by the Department.

5. Department support for the participation of its faculty in national and international research conferences and / or projects.
6. Collaboration between faculty members and organizations (special schools, adult education agencies, etc.) as well as social, cultural and productive agencies.
7. Social contribution, for example in the form of public speeches delivered by the faculty to the community and the media addressing issues examined within the academic expertise of the department.

Equally clear is the conduct of an annual evaluation report. Replete with statistical data, the Report represents a recurring participatory process that reflects the overall state of the Department, including strengths and areas in need of improvement. Such an endeavour, however, does not lay fallow, but is acted upon with enthusiasm for improvement. Such was the tenor as well during our virtual site visit. The genuine interest in and openness to feedback for improvement was palpable.

With regard to continuous improvement and implementation of the Quality Assurance Policy, many committees and sources, both internal and external, contribute. Prime among them is the Internal Evaluation Committee in collaboration with the Institution's Quality Assurance Unit. Examples of other committees include the Curriculum Committee, the Erasmus+ Committee, the Practicum Committee, and the Study Guide Committee. Collaboration with External Stakeholders is equally apparent, such as supervisors at Practicum venues and former graduates of the program.

The Quality Assurance Policy is well publicized and available in both the Greek and English renditions of the Department Website as well as in the annual Study Guide.

Additional discussion on the Study Guide is offered in Principles #2 and #3.

ANALYSIS OF JUDGMENT

The goodness of fit between what is offered in written materials, what we learned and discerned from interviews, coupled with the compatible and complementary perspectives of stakeholders contributed to our conclusion.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The EEAP recommends continuing the current efforts in community engagement.

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 most recent Studies Regulation, which provides guidelines that govern students, attendance, structure of studies, requirements for graduation, etc. was approved in 2019 by both the General Assembly of the Department as well as the University of Macedonia Senate. Design, however, is clearly both continual and inclusive in nature. Feedback is regularly solicited through formal means from current student evaluations, from program graduates, faculty input, and feedback from stakeholders, practicum sites and supervisors, as well as via informal impromptu channels as they occur.

A minimum of eight semester hours are required for graduation and "courses" can take the form of tutorials, labs, lectures, seminars, and practicums, the latter of which are mandatory during the last year of study. Most practicums are local, but an option exists through the Erasmus program to go abroad. Moreover, after completion of the first semester one may even make an application to study or take courses at a participating Erasmus University for a period of from 3-12 months. Hope was expressed for the further expansion of Erasmus opportunities in the post pandemic era.

The connection between theory and practice is taken very seriously and improvements have been made in this regard over the past several years. Concerted efforts are made to stay connected with former graduates and some even serve as practicum mentors in the venue in which they are

employed. A recent systematic survey conducted with graduates revealed the high evaluation given to their preparation, but also illuminated the desire and need to offer a more helpful balance between conceptual/theoretical and practical learning experiences evenbefore embarking upon a practicum. Admirable adjustments are in process. The practicum supervisors with whom we had the pleasure to meet and interview were very enthusiastic with regard to the calibre and preparation of the students and quite committed to their further development. Stressed was the crucial importance of not treating the students as "slaves" or "gophers." Rather, they should be treated as future colleagues and were there to develop professionally, viewing the role of the practicum in being a catalyst toward that end. One interviewee suggested that students be exposed to potential career sites earlier in the program even during the first semesters. The aim at that point would be just to experience exposure to the venue, stressing that not everyone is suited to all sites, and it would help to obtain a more hands-on understanding of the type of work entailed.

Publication of learning outcomes, expectations, responsibilities, etc., all of which are clearly articulated, are made available via two sources: (a) Study Guide, (b) Practicum Guide. Both arevery informative, comprehensive, and available on the Department website that is offered in both Greek and English. The Study Guide also includes a description of all courses offered. Anupdated Guide is published each year (currently 2020-2021), but four years' worth of guides are retained on the site, thus enabling students to re-visit information and courses that may have applied to their earlier matriculation. The Practicum Guide sets out the aims, organization/coordination, requirements for participation, student regulations, responsibilities, procedures, etc. When student interviewees were asked about their experience in using the Guides, a resounding response was received in terms of how important it was and how they looked forward each year to seeing what had changed or beenupdated. Given their comprehensive nature, the Guides may also function to support learner responsibility and autonomy as the model of learner-centred education is continually embraced and expanded.

With regard to the question of how the curriculum compares with "appropriate universally accepted standards for the specific area of study," we would like to point out that many faculty members have lived and worked at universities abroad, including in tenured positions so have first-hand knowledge of the areas of study from a global perspective. This scenario undoubtedly helps strengthen understanding of the global commonalities to the specific area of study (while respecting the unique character of various countries and cultures). We had theopportunity to interview several such faculty. An illustrative example: one professor specializing in the deaf populations worked at Gallaudet University in Washington DC, a premier higher education institution (university) exclusively dedicated to deaf students—in fact, the only university in the world where students live and learn in sign language.

That said, although we may not bring content expertise for the major of working with special needs populations, based on the expertise we do bring in at least one of the major areas (continuous adult education and lifelong learning), however, we would like to offer suggestions for further bolstering the program offerings to more fully embrace a few universally accepted standards for the specific area of study. That said, we are aware that the availability of additional human resources (i.e., faculty positions) is unfortunately unlikely and these very hard-working faculty are already carrying mammoth loads with regard to faculty/student ratios and class sizes. Therefore, what we offer is potential food for future thought. To their credit, we observed that those responsible for teaching adult education-oriented courses appear to be aware of and involved in role modelling adult learning theory for learners majoring in this area. Consequently, learners have the opportunity to experience,not just study the approach. While the Introductory course (i.e., Introduction to Adult Education) and a few

others do cover the history of the field, its international reach, and some principles of adult learning, the lack of a specific semester long course on Adult Learning (with or without Adult Development because we noted a course on Lifespan Development) is a core element in most accepted standards for such degree matriculation. Such an observation does not negate the current strength of the program but is offered as a recommendation if and when additional course and/or faculty become possible. Alternatively, it might be feasible to host a seminar type format that brings in others from a distance to address this issue. Faculty already seem proficient in such a format, as they had remarked how the pandemic catalysed the opportunity and practice of increasingly employing guest lecturers.

ANALYSIS OF JUDGMENT

Corroboration was evidenced between what is written in all the documents we reviewed, the actual operationalization of the writings, and feedback from students, graduates, and stakeholders. Consequently, our evaluation is one of fully compliant.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

To the extent possible, consider ways to increase the curricular depth and breadth of focus on adult learning and development in theory and practice, ideally within a bio-psycho-socio- cultural-spiritual framework.

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

Over a number of decades now, the model of Student-Centred Learning has gained much momentum globally, including in higher education. With the acknowledgment that the lifespans of individuals have grown while the time span of knowledge has decreased, the importance of learning how to learn complements and in some ways supersedes the skills tolearning how to be taught.

Faculty, students, and stakeholders of the Department of Educational and Social Policy at the University of Macedonia are keenly aware of and embrace the notion of fostering student- centred learning as evidenced not only in our interviews with many groups, but also in many written documents. Students are involved in planning, assessment, research, sharing in the decision-making, and are active partners in the entire educational process. Faculty form partnerships with their

students.

Moreover, students are encouraged to learn from each other. From our interviews with students, they appeared very supportive of one another. Interestingly, the students we interviewed reported actually benefitting from the pandemic that necessitated virtual learning. They reported the benefits of being able to see each other, albeit as small icons, that seems to have brought them closer together as a learning community. In addition, the "break out rooms" that were possible on-line promoted more group work, again contributing to their further solidification as a learning community. The advantage of being able to attract even more guest speakers was also noted and emphasized, building upon the already consistent practice of bringing in guests, for example graduates of the program, to introduce students to career development even in their first semester, as well as NGOs and many additional stakeholders.

Two particular matters are unique to this program.

1. **With regard to the major in Education of People with Special Needs**

    The program has a sizeable number of students with disabilities who are matriculating in the degree program (a bit greater than the 5% that the law provides). Such students are in a unique environment to benefit from the inclusive attitude that is quite apparent from other students, since all have opted to enrol in a program that focuses on special needs. In addition, those who may not have disabilities are actually able to learn with and from others that may sustain the very disabilities they are studying. Such a confluence of factors bodes well for a very rich learning environment and contributes to the further promotion of student-centred learning. We recommend further capitalizing on this scenario.

2. **With regard to the major in Continuous (lifelong, adult) Learning**
    We had the privilege of interviewing one of the students who actually qualified as an adult learner. As with the above situation, studying about oneself or about those with whom one is matriculating enhances learning. To accommodate such learners and consistent with potentially flexible learning pathways characteristic of student-centred learning, we also noted that some courses were offered at night. Faculty in this major also embrace a variety of approaches that seem to respect the life experiences of adults and encourage more self-direction in learning. We are of the position that a conducive environment exists that could further attract more adult learners.

In general, student input, feedback, and concerns are taken very seriously. Close connections are also held with graduates, especially but not limited to those with work positions that enable them to serve as Practicum mentors. The need, for example, for clearer course titles (i.e., more descriptive of the focus) was echoed by both graduates and current students as was the request for additional focus on practice to balance theory. The students we interviewed represented a mix of different matriculation years and in comparing experiences verified to us that such changes were embraced and ongoing.

Although noted in Principle 1, and discussed in Principle 2, it bears repeating that the Student Guides (Study Guide and Practicum Guide) were heartily lauded and applauded by the students we interviewed as a lifeblood to the program. The annual revision and updated renditions, posted on the easy to navigate websites in both Greek and English, also "showcase" the program and illuminates their student-centred orientation.

ANALYSIS OF JUDGMENT

Transitioning to a model of Student-centred Learning is an incremental process. More than just embracing a set or procedures, policies, or methods (albeit important), it also requires an attitudinal shift from a teacher-control and oriented approach to one of a teaching-learning team, one of partnership and mutual respect. In addition to the concrete ways in which the Department has policies and practices in place that actively involve the learner, fundamental was the nuanced atmosphere that we experienced with regard to the way they spoke of and referred to each other. It is our position that this Department is modelling student-centred learning in both theory and practice.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Give further consideration to the unique opportunity and environment each major (and associated population) presents to further grow an environment in which students can learn with and from each other (about self and about those with whom one is matriculating).
- Consider the possibility of attracting more adult learners and more students with disabilities (including for the Master's and Ph.D. programs), as they represent the population being studied in the curriculum and provide a living laboratory. Such a confluence of factors bodes well for a very rich learning environment and contributes to the further promotion of student-centred learning. We recommend further capitalizing on this scenario.

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 has in place both processes and tools to collect, manage and act on information regarding student progression. The unit in charge is under the direction of the Head of the Department, who maintains the relevant records and has assured the EEAP that these data are collected and maintained in line with the General Data Protection Regulation.

Student progression

The data presented about student progression were impressive: The EEAP found excellent results at all levels from recruitment to graduation and even beyond such as employment aftergraduation. About 80% graduate and their average grade is over 7.5 with the 2018-2019 figure to be 7,97[4]. It would be useful to have the figures since then (2018/2019), particularly data that compare the figures prior to and after the pandemic.

	2018/2019	2017/2018	2017/2016	2015/2016
Percentage of graduates ofnormal period (4 years)	79,25%	83,82%	86,78%	78,26%
Average grade of degree	7,97	7,83	7,44	7,64

Procedures concerning the award and recognition of higher education degrees, the duration ofstudies, rules ensuring student progression, terms and conditions for student mobility should allbe based on the institutional study regulations. Appropriate recognition procedures rely on institutional practice for

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[4] *PowerPoint presented by Professor Maria Platsidou at the Teleconference with OMEA & MODIP representatives on Monday, 14/06/2021, slide 30.*

recognition of credits among various European academic departmentsand Institutions, in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

Graduation represents the culmination of the students' study period. Students receive the necessary 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).

Mobility

Whilst the Department professes a commitment and would encourage student and faculty mobility, the results are not positive. This is largely the effect of objective barriers that preventstudents who cannot afford to take up the mobility opportunities and parents who justifiably prefer to save their funds for their education of children for a Master's level, if they can afford it. The tables below are indicative of the problems of mobility[5].

ERASMUS+ student mobility for studies

	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	Total
Incoming students	2	3	4	4	5	6	10	3	1	3	41
Outgoing students	10	17	5	10	13	7	17	10	10	9	108

ERASMUS+ student mobility for practicum

	2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	Total
Outgoing students	0	2	1	1	4	2	1	4	6	0	21

Faculty mobility via the Erasmus+ program is also very low. Again, this must be explained as another structural barrier resulting from economic and financial constraints, understaffing andoverload with responsibilities. The state must provide further support, incentives and resourcesto overcome these serious barriers[6].

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[5] *PowerPoint presented by Professor Maria Platsidou at the Teleconference with OMEA & MODIP representatives on Monday, 14/06/2021, slide 23.*
[6] *PowerPoint presented by Professor Maria Platsidou at the Teleconference with OMEA & MODIP representatives on Monday, 14/06/2021*

ERASMUS+ Faculty mobility - Incoming Faculty

2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	ΣΥΝΟΛΟ
6	2	1	4	1	4	2	2	0	0	22

Outgoing Faculty

2010-2011	2011-2012	2012-2013	2013-2014	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	ΣΥΝΟΛΟ
0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2

Staff mobility is just as low, with only 4 members of staff having exercised this important opportunity. A comprehensive strategy and incentives for encouraging further mobility via the Erasmus+ and other programs for structured international exchanges of students is strongly recommended. As Europeanisation and globalization allows for better connection of knowledgeand work clusters beyond national borders such exchanges would allow for better utilization ofexchange of experiences, learning and networking with stakeholders for students with various related institutions and facilitation for educational and work experience, including the smooth progression of students from education to work.
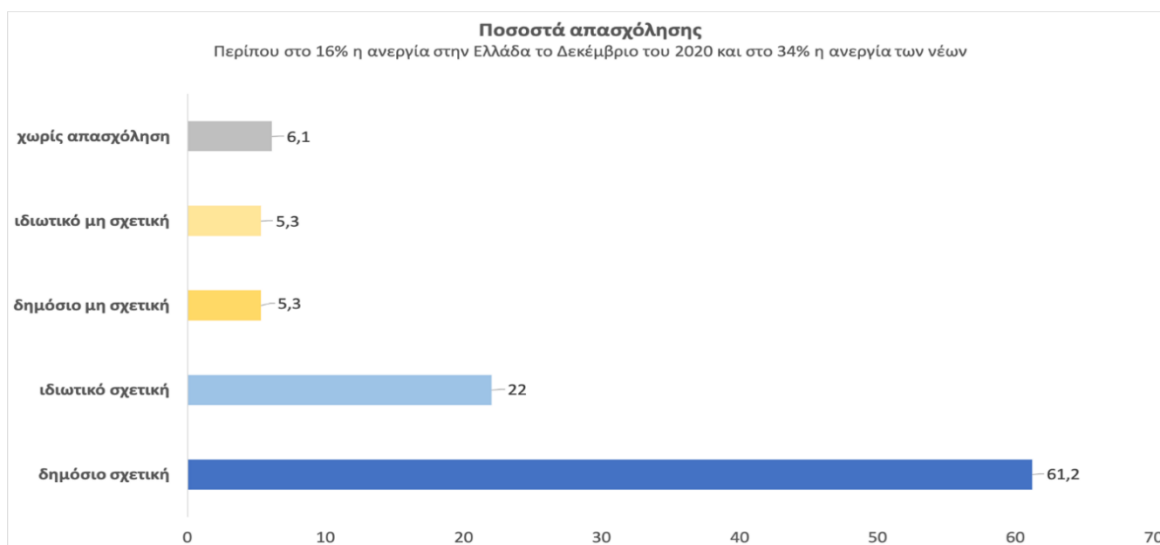
Graduates' recognition of their diploma and employment

Whilst Greece faces immense problems with unemployment, particularly amongst the young, as it currently stands 34% of the graduates in this program seem to enjoy very high levels of employment. The EEAP notes the impressive record of employment as well as the recognition noted by the stakeholders and employers interviewed. The study presented by the Departmentbased on a small sample of 320 graduates shows high level of satisfaction by the graduates themselves about the content and skills acquired by their study (almost 80% state they are "extremely satisfied" or "very satisfied')[7]; also, over 80% find employment within 12 months, out of whom over 60% within six months[8]. Moreover, only 6% are without employment. See graph below[9]:

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[7] *PowerPoint presented by Professor Maria Platsidou at the Teleconference with OMEA & MODIP representatives on Monday, 14/06/2021, slide 35*

[8] *PowerPoint presented by Professor Maria Platsidou at the Teleconference with OMEA & MODIP representatives on Monday, 14/06/2021, slide 33*

[9] *PowerPoint presented by Professor Maria Platsidou at the Teleconference with OMEA & MODIP representatives on Monday, 14/06/2021, slide 32*

Ποσοστά απασχόλησης
Περίπου στο 16% η ανεργία στην Ελλάδα το Δεκέμβριο του 2020 και στο 34% η ανεργία των νέων

- χωρίς απασχόληση — 6,1
- ιδιωτικό μη σχετική — 5,3
- δημόσιο μη σχετική — 5,3
- ιδιωτικό σχετική — 22
- δημόσιο σχετική — 61,2

Recognition and Certification

The students, employers and stakeholders interviewed have all commended the Department about the excellent standards, recognition and good reputation of the undergraduate degrees, the Master's and expertise it offers.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The EEAP recommends that more incentives and resources be granted to facilitate student, faculty and staff mobility.

Principle 5: Teaching Staff

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

> *The Institutions and their academic units have a major responsibility as to the standard of their teaching staff providing them with a supportive environment that promotes the advancement of their scientific work. In particular, the academic unit should:*
>
> - *set up and follow clear, transparent and fair processes for the recruitment of properly qualified staff and offer them conditions of employment that recognize the importance of teaching and research;*
> - *offer opportunities and promote the professional development of the teaching staff;*
> - *encourage scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research;*
> - *encourage innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies;*
> - *promote the increase of the volume and quality of the research output within the academic unit;*
> - *follow quality assurance processes for all staff members (with respect to attendance requirements, performance, self-assessment, training etc.);*
> - *develop policies to attract highly qualified academic staff.*

Study Programme Compliance

The Department of Educational & Social Policy at the University of Macedonia includes 18 permanent faculty members in various professional ranks. In addition, there are 6 Laboratory Teaching Personnel, 2 Special Technical Lab Personnel, 1 Adjunct Lecturer, 2 Teaching Fellows, Academic Teaching Experience for new Scientists/ PhD Holders. These faculty members teach at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

The faculty bring strong academic credentials with graduate work completed at Greek universities and institutions of higher education in Europe and the United States. They are professionally active, authoring and publishing research in both Greek and English-speaking academic outlets. These include scholarship in books, refereed/non-refereed journals, edited volumes, reports and proceedings. The faculty accomplish this work by collaborating with colleagues within the unit, across other universities in Greece, as well as with international scholars. Even though the degree of professional productivity varies by faculty member, the collective output is in line with the level expected for an undergraduate program in the fieldsof study offered by the Department.

The faculty scholarship is supported by the Department through sabbaticals and professional leaves as well as funding for travel to conferences. Furthermore, faculty are successful in securing external funding from private sources as well as other national and EU sources. It is important to note that faculty have participated in activities sponsored by ERASMUS. ThroughERASMUS, the Department maintains relationships with many universities in Europe such as the European University Cyprus, Ludwig-Maximilians Universitat, Niccolo Cusano University, Stenden University of Applied Sciences, Stockholm University, University of Latvia, etc. Additionally, the faculty maintain relationships with US based colleges and universities. It is apparent from these engagements that the Department of Educational and Social Policy at the University of Macedonia recognizes the importance of internationalization in career development and its positive impact on faculty development.

The faculty-student ratio is an essential component to successfully furthering academic quality and student success. The Departmental ratio is very high (1-54) in comparison to general standards, making it critical for adding more faculty to the academic staff. The upcoming departure of an existing colleague is causing understandable angst since, if not replaced, the faculty-student ratio will increase considerably.

The faculty teaching load is 2-2 (6 hours of teaching time per week). Though they face the significant challenge of serving a large number of students, the faculty are able to productively engage in research activities. Faculty also provide oversight for Practicums. However, these commitments are not part of the formal load. Along with teaching, the annual evaluation process includes research and service to the Department. It should be noted that, regarding, service, a number of faculty committees are in place, contributing to the governance of the unit.

A review of the academic background, reveals that the faculty are highly qualified, possessing appropriate credentials. While there is no direct, identifiable connection between research and teaching effectiveness, it is anticipated that when faculty maintain an active research agenda, these pursuits help to improve teaching methods, strengthen the student experience and subsequently contribute to the program's overall success.

According to the information provided, curricular offerings include a number of elective courses and seminars. This allows for opportunities for faculty to further develop their research agendas in the process integrating their scholarship into the classroom. The presence of curricular flexibility also encourages, when appropriate, the introduction of innovative and timely courses that can be responsive to student needs.

There is a clearly established instructional evaluation process, with an approved instrument, which provides students with an opportunity to offer teaching faculty constructive feedback. The Department utilizes the data to improve instructional practices while meeting course outcomes. However, the student participation rate in evaluating courses is extremely low and should be an area of major concern. Specifically, before the pandemic, when students had an opportunity to complete the surveys in printed form, the completion rate ranged between 30-35%. During the pandemic, when courses transitioned to online delivery, the instructional evaluations were distributed electronically causing a completion rate decline between 20- 25%. On a global scale, this phenomenon is not unusual, and has been frequently observed with the advent of online evaluations. Often based on a perceived concern by the students with a potential lack of anonymity, as more secure portals and accompanying assurance of anonymity continue to increase matters could ameliorate somewhat. Nevertheless, focusing attention on the important opportunity and role that such input and feedback play and further communicating and stressing that to students seems warranted.

At this time, no clear direction exists regarding a defined research strategy within the Department. Current academic strengths are drawn from the research interests and agendas of specific faculty members. A number of research centres recently emerged but they are in varying degrees of maturity. The Department could begin having more deliberate conversations regarding this topic, something that can also inform future faculty hiring decisions. Again, the presence of the following research centres is a source of potential strength; however, it is also indicative of the need for planning since these initiatives are connected to individual faculty interests rather than a strategic orientation in conceptualizing and executing a broad research strategy. Regarding the centres, more information on their activities is necessary before any assessment can be made as to their potential contribution.

Specifically, the Centres/Laboratories include:
1. Laboratory of Theoretical and Applied Neurosciences
2. Laboratory of Accessibility and Support of Individuals with Disabilities
3. Laboratory of Informatics and Robotics applications in Education and Society (LIRES)
4. Laboratory of Autism - Developmental Spectrum Disorders and Behaviour Difficulties of the Human
5. Laboratory of Studies, Applications and Interventions in Communication and Deafness
6. Laboratory of Applications for the Educational and Social Inclusion of individuals with learning and adaptation difficulties (LAESI)

Another way to enrich the curriculum and to address the high faculty student ratio is to attract Fulbright and other Visiting Scholars or other faculty from abroad. These colleagues will contribute to diversifying the culture of the Department by delivering lectures and by collaborating with the existing faculty and students on research projects. These scholars would prove especially beneficial if courses in English became part of the curriculum. Such a strategy would also expand the students' academic experiences and strengthen the international reputation of the Department.

Overall, this is a very collegial academic unit. The faculty members are dedicated and work very hard to meet the needs of the students and strengthen the academic profile of the Department.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Given the high student-faculty ratio, the Department can explore ways to attract Fulbright Visiting Scholars or other faculty from abroad who are searching for professional leaves and/or sabbatical appointments.
- The academic leadership of the Department and its faculty members should explore ways to improve the student feedback in instructional evaluations. Some best practices for advancing student evaluations that could be explored, if applicable, include (1) making access effortless (easy access via Learning Management System), (2) device access (mobile phone or iPad), (3) multiple direct entry points (automated reminders), (4) no survey/no grade (consider making the survey mandatory), (5) feedback matters (identify ways that student feedback is shown to inform change), (6) reserve time (allocate specific time at end of course for students to complete this task), and (7) if online, assure anonymity.
- The Department should create comprehensive websites for all research centres.
- The Department should continue to pursue international partnerships as a way to strengthen its academic reputation.

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 campus environment provides the Department with access to facilities as conveyed in the reports provided by the university and derived from conversations with the faculty and unit leadership. Specifically, the Department has been allocated two dedicated classrooms (seminar rooms) with access to additional classrooms for common use. The Department is alsothe recipient of a dedicated computer lab space with access to similar facilities for common use. The unit also has access to one room (shared with the Music Department) that is generally utilized for instruction. Regardless of these physical resources, it is apparent that classrooms and labs are far from appropriate in supporting the teaching and learning environment. For example, the computer laboratory is very small with just 15 seats. Furthermore, the administration of the unit involves the clustering of staff in a highlycongested room. Additionally, students are unable to find seating in the auditorium, often forced to seat in nearby steps. That is because a 120-seat auditorium is inadequate to accommodate 150-180 attending students.

Students report not having reliable WI-FI access, and while the opensource statistical softwarethat is available meets their learning needs, this cost saving approach may have a long-term negative impact on the quality of the academic preparation. A number of electronic tools areemployed to deliver services to students (grade submission, student records, registration). Space limitations forces faculty to utilize the online reservation system toidentify available space across campus.

These limitations also impact the operation of the research centres. None of them have their own, dedicated space. Additionally, though the Department faculty have been very successfulin gaining access to equipment to support the academic mission, some of the equipment remains in boxes or stored in various faculty offices due to lack of available lab and research spaces.

The distribution of existing facilities may be rational but is unacceptable in successfullycarrying the mission of the Department. In spite of these limitations, the staff ensure exceptional management of these resources and are committed, under very difficult circumstances, to find ways to meet the needs of the students.

There is a comprehensive campus infrastructure in place. However, when the university was initially constructed to serve about 4,000 students, the current student population of 12,000 presents major challenges. Health and counselling services, athletic facilities, a cafeteria, a dormitory, and study spaces (inside and outside) are easily accessible. Students report that the Library resources are acceptable though the faculty note that, due to cost limitations, the university has been unable to maintain access to mainstream research journal subscriptions. This can have an adverse effect on teaching, research, and learning.

A review of the Department website reveals that the site could be more extensively utilized to communicate with students and the broader community it serves, furthering the flow and timeliness of information. In that regard the services provided could be more functional and easily accessed by the students.

Faculty are engaged in academic advising and are present to meet with students regularly forfour hours per week. These times are publicly posted on their office doors. The faculty often make themselves available to students beyond the noted times. Students identify their advisors based on their academic interests and program of study. Faculty are assigned to provide career guidance to students in addition to a university career centre. Due to the nature of the two academic programs, faculty offer opportunities for career guidance outsidethe public sector. The administrative staff are experienced and provide competent, dedicatedsupport to students.

Overall, the Department personnel go above and beyond, within a highly restrictive environment, to support the students.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The Department could use the website to further improve the communication.
- The Department should continue to advocate for access to adequate lab and classroomspaces.
- Given that courses are offered in the evening hours, the Department could also consider expanding its administrative services to students during those times.

Principle 7: Information Management

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

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

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

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

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

The Head of the Department collects and maintains the relevant data and records purporting tobe in line with the General Data Protection Regulation. Moreover, there are also general data collected and maintained by the University centrally.

From the presentations it was apparent that the Department and the University as a whole operate an effective information system for the management and monitoring of data concerning students, teaching staff, course structure and organization, teaching and provision of services to students as well as to the academic community. The data seem reliable and present accurate information for decision making, as well as for identifying areas of smooth operation and areas for improvement.

During the presentations, the Head of the Department shared some aspects that demonstrate an effective procedure for collecting and analysing information on study programmes; other activities feed data into the internal system of quality assurance. The following were presented:

- 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

The EEPA is satisfied that students and staff are involved in providing and analysing informationand planning follow-up activities. What was impressive was the new ongoing survey data, recently collected for graduates of the Alumni Office of the Department (N = 320) pertaining toemployment, satisfaction, usefulness of the skills and knowledge acquired during the study andrecognition after they graduate.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

A good practice is the survey data, recently collected for graduates of the Alumni Office of the Department pertaining to employment, satisfaction, usefulness of the skills and knowledge acquired during the study and recognition after they graduate. We recommend further development, maintenance and utilization of such data to be fed into the discussions on how to improve quality, access and orientation for the future.

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 effectively communicates the various research, intellectual output and community engagement activities to prospective and current students, graduates, other stakeholders and the public. This is apparent from the success in recruitment, the growth and the reputation the Department enjoys with engaged stakeholders and the communities it serves.

The Department, via the unit website, the regular public lecturers, the disabilities art festival and outreach activities discussed below, provides information about these 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.

There are indirect ways, as well, through which public information about a program is disseminated, one of which is through community outreach and engagement. Through its practicum program, required of students, the Department has developed an extensive network of community agents (employers and social partners). Those we interviewed hailed from an array of societal institutions, all of whom remarked on the high calibre of students and their preparedness. We would like to encourage the Department to continue to expand and explore practicum opportunities for students, especially with enhanced exploration into the private and NGO sectors that might be interested in contributing and willing to foster the professional development of students. In addition, consistent with the student-cantered learning model, further enlist and encourage student involvement in locating and proposing potential venues.

Several other ways in which public information about the program is illuminated:

1. The Training and Lifelong Learning Centre, an autonomous self-sustaining unit offering non formal and informal learning opportunities, that services an array of populations and clientele, including business executives and the unemployed, to enrich their knowledge and develop skills. Some of the faculty offer their services here as well.
2. Development and hosting once again of the now Fourth Reflection on Disability in Art International Festival, scheduled for December 2021, which supports the presentation of, and discussion about, work made by disabled artists.

Such community engagement helps further public understanding of and increases program quality.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Further improve its website and extend the Department's outreach activities and networking.

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

From the material provided to the committee, as well as from our exchanges with faculty members, it is clear that the Department is very proactive in developing self-assessment strategies. As noted on the website, teaching and research staff, special technical laboratorystaff, special teaching staff, and administrative staff are involved in various aspects of advancing the goals of the Department.

On the academic front, the Department is doing a good job in exposing students to the latest scholarly developments and debates. This is taking place because there is a genuine desire toimprove the operational aspects of the unit to better serve the students. For example, intentionally accessing relevant equipment (primarily via competitive grants) to improve teaching, learning, and research is an example of how the Department focuses on self-assessment and strategically considers improvement.

Regarding curriculum development, the Department has a highly operational Curriculum Committee. The membership reviews the Undergraduate Study Program annually, monitors course modifications, and serves in a manner that is greatly appreciated and valued for its exemplary service by the leadership. It is important to note that the Committee considers scholarly trends, career needs, student feedback, and partner insights in identifying ways that could contribute to strengthening the course of study. Furthermore, the Committee examines research developments nationally and internationally. Since the two programs in special education and continuing education launched, it is clear that the Department has made considerable progress and reached greater maturity in meeting its goals.

An internal assessment mechanism is in place and annually evaluates the program of study and related Departmental activities. Data are annually collected and reported to the curriculum committee. While these elements are in place, faculty conveyed concern with the presence of a large number of

committees, something that was also noted in the 2013 visit. It is difficult to ascertain the true impact of this work. The Department may want to consider streamlining these committees and explore an alternative structure to ensure greater effectiveness.

The Department is doing an excellent job monitoring progress and completion of students who are engaged in their studies and have a clear sense of direction. However, it is difficult to ascertain how the Department is addressing the challenges posed by those students who fall behind. Information on students, including data on the length of studies and graduation rates, is helpful but questions remain on whether and how the information collected is used to monitor progress towards degree completion. While it is difficult to determine the degree of students' overall satisfaction with the programme, the groups of students and alumni with whom we met expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the programme. This in turn conveys the ability of the Department to pursue excellence for those students committed to their academics.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The Department should consider streamlining the internal faculty committees to ensure greater efficiency and effectiveness.
- The Department should improve its mechanisms and processes for monitoring student progress towards degree completion.

Principle 10: Regular External Evaluation of Undergraduate Programmes

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

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

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

The Department is currently undergoing its first undergraduate programme accreditation review and has already undergone an external evaluation review in 2013. The latter's recommendations resulted in the drafting of an action plan, some of which has been adopted and implemented. For example, the Department crafted a vision and a mission; considered the sequence of courses; and increased research activity.

Two issues that emerged at that time and (re)emerged during this external evaluation visit include: (1) the identification of a new name for the Department that reflects its academic mission, as well as (2) secure and maintain more adequate lab spaces and equipment. Thefaculty, administrative staff, and the students are intimately involved and understand the importance of the review process.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The Department should engage systematically external stakeholders. This could entail regular semester meetings with the entire Department.
- The Department should continue its long-standing efforts to discuss ways that a new name for the unit could better reflect its academic mission.
- The Department should continue to advocate for access to adequate lab and classroom spaces.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

The EEAP reiterates that despite the unfortunate circumstances that did not allow for physical face-to-face contact, it remains confident that it has an excellent sense of the issues primarily as a result of the efforts, good preparation, engagement and excellent cooperation of the Department, the UMAC Rector, the Chair, faculty and stakeholders interviewed. The clear and comprehensive presentations as well as the documentation and the information provided and the honest exchanges during the review process made our task easier and smoother.

We have concluded that in the UMAC Department of Educational and Social Policy there is a strong commitment to educational excellence, accessibility, open learning and care about the communities it serves. The EEAP was impressed by the hospitable, open and welcoming spirit of the Department, who welcomed any potential findings pertaining to weaknesses and challenges. Also, impressive was the demonstration of a determination to overcome any barriers on the path to academic excellence, access and a sense of ownership and belonging to students and the wider communities it serves. The EEAP unanimously found a healthy educational approach committed to both excellence, learning, and improvement.

Furthermore, the EEAP has found, 8 years since the last review, exactly the same spirit noted by the External Evaluation Report (2013):[12]

- "Most striking, from the beginning, was a bona fide spirit of collegiality, civility, cooperation, and mutual understanding among the current faculty, on all functional matters of the Department, even while it is composed of two not entirely symmetrical or compatible components/subfields, largely because of different disciplinary, epistemological, and methodological characteristics intrinsic to the fields involved."
- "This very good climate has been achieved with serious effort over the last years on the part of the Chair and faculty, who had to account for the various asymmetries between the two subfields, and their different approaches because of differences in the fields. This collective effort was evident in the way the faculty approached the External Evaluation Committee and the academic review process in general - without any suspicion or reluctance, but rather with an open mind, transparency, and accountability, willingness to respond to all questions regardless, and exceedingly thorough preparation and presentation. It is specifically this general willingness to improve and grow that grants this Department enormous potential."

The EEAP records that since 2013, when the External Evaluation Report evaluated and made recommendations,[13] a massive expansion and significant progress is evidenced, because of the efforts by the Department and the University to address the weaknesses and to meet the recommendations made.

Once again, we must underscore that this great potential is seriously hampered by the number of inhibiting factors, which can be located at the state level and illuminated already in the 2013 External Evaluation Report. In fact, the EEAP would like to underscore that today those same factors are more serious, and the problems have accentuated despite the heroic efforts of the faculty and staff for the following reasons:

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[12] EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT (2013), p. 16.
[13] EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT (2013).

- As Greece continues to face the consequences of the severe economic and social crisis, causing more severe social and welfare difficulties and challenges, institutions face greater strains, chronic understaffing, lack of resources, underfunding and ongoing budgetary constraints
- Whilst the expansion of the Department and the University as whole is a welcome indication of the great work and effort, there remains the fact that the allocation of faculty, staff and resources makes the challenges of maintaining the high standards evengreater.

I.　Features of Good Practice

- International Art Festival.
- Excellent practicum experiences for students.
- A good practice is the survey data, recently collected for graduates of the Alumni Officeof the Department pertaining to employment, satisfaction, usefulness of the skills and knowledge acquired during the study and recognition after they graduate. We recommend further development, maintenance and utilization of such data to be fed into the discussions on how improve quality, access and orientation for the future.
- Continuous community engagement through a variety of means.

II.　Areas of Weakness

- Limited space availability negatively impacts the effectiveness of the program.
- Inability to creatively engage with the community and respond to changing educational needs due to structural barriers (legislation and state bureaucracy).
- High faculty-student ratio.
- Understaffed and under resourced.
- Inability to utilize mobility opportunities for faculty, staff, and students due to structural barriers.

III.　Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

The EEAP recommends the following:

- The Department and the University further pursue the change of the name of the Department to more accurately represent the activities of the Department and the two pathways as, for example, Department of (Continuous) Learning, Education, and Rehabilitation Sciences (Τμήμα Επιστημών Μάθησης, Εκπαίδευσης, και Αποκατάστασης).
- Further community engagement, both formal and informal, to facilitate enhanced institutional capacity for faculty and students and contribute to improving the programmatic offerings to improve and strengthen the quality of the programs.

- To the extent possible, consider ways to increase the curricular depth and breadth of focus on adult learning and development in theory and practice.
- Consider a comprehensive strategy and incentives for encouraging further mobility via the Erasmus+ and other programs for structured international exchanges of students: strongly recommended.
- Continue to advocate for access to adequate lab and classroom spaces.
- Attract more adult learners
- Better utilize and further recruit students with disabilities matriculating in the degree program and master's and PhD programs as it bodes well for a very rich learning environment for the very population being studied and contributes to the further promotion of student-centred learning for all.
- Attract Fulbright Visiting Scholars or other faculty from abroad who are searching for professional leaves and/or sabbatical appointments.
- The academic leadership of the Department and its faculty members should explore ways to improve the student feedback in instructional evaluations.
- Create comprehensive websites for all research centres.
- Continue to pursue and enhance international partnerships as a way to strengthen its academic reputation.
- Further enhance the social role of the Department with a strategy for broader community engagement.

IV.   Summary & Overall Assessment

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

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **4, 6, 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	**X**
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname   **Signature**

1. **Professor Nicos Trimikliniotis (Chair)**
   University of Nicosia, Cyprus

2. **Professor Marcie Boucouvalas,**
   Virginia Tech, United States of America

3. **Professor Costas Spirou**
   Georgia College & State University, United States of America