



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ

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ΑΡΧΗ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ
ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΣΤΗΝ ΑΝΩΤΑΤΗ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗ

HELLENIC REPUBLIC

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HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE
AND ACCREDITATION AGENCY

Accreditation Report
for the Undergraduate Study Programme of:
Economics
University of Macedonia
October 12, 2019

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



Report of the Panel appointed by the HQA to undertake the review of the
Undergraduate Study Programme of **Economics** 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 Accreditation Panel

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the Undergraduate Study Programme of **Economics** of the **University of Macedonia** comprised the following four (4) members, drawn from the HQA Register, in accordance with the Law 4009/2011:

1. **Professor Michael S. Michael** (Chair)
University of Cyprus, Cyprus
2. **Professor Michel Dimou**
University of Toulon, France
3. **Professor Nikias Sarafoglou**
Clarewood University, USA
4. **Eftichia Kivrakidou**
Economic Chamber of Greece

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

The panel members arrived in Athens on Sunday, the 6th of October. On Monday morning, they met at the HQA office. After an official briefing on the procedures and requirements, the panel members departed for the University of Macedonia.

On the morning of Tuesday, October 8th, the panel had its first meeting with the Vice-Rector and President of MODIP, Professor Dimitrios Kyrkilis, Head of Department, Professor Konstantinos Velentzas as well as members of the Department of Economics (DoE) Quality Assurance Unit (QAU). Subsequently, the panel met with faculty members of the Department of Economics. The Panel was briefed on the Department's structure, organization and goals. During the meeting several documents were presented and delivered to the Panel members concerning the curriculum, students, teaching methods, and research activities. Further, the meeting with the Department faculty covered various teaching and research issues related to the programme as well as other issues for staff members and on-goings of the Department.

In the afternoon, the Panel met with students, without the presence of Departmental staff. Students revealed their experiences and the discussion with the panel members was very informative. The students were open and frank about their experiences and views, and overall very positive. The panel also met with former students as representatives of the alumni of the DoE. They similarly provided useful insights. The common view for the DoE and of their studies there was very favourable although they also identified some areas for improvement.

The second day started with a University tour in which the Panel met the administrative and technical staff, and visited the DoE's installations such as classrooms, lecture halls, the computer labs, staff offices and meeting rooms. Central facilities of the university, that the DoE students have access to, such as the Library, computer lab, were also visited. The administrative staff was very helpful by providing useful information of how the facilities are being used. Overall, the Panel's view of the resources available to the DoE students was positive. Later in the same day, the Panel members met again with the DoE staff, MODIP and QAU members, where some required clarifications and other issues were addressed.

All meetings with teaching, technical and administrative staff, undergraduate, postgraduate students and alumni, were very useful and informative. They were conducted in a very sincere and constructive manner, and all Panel questions were answered sincerely and without avoiding any issue. The staff of the DoE have provided the Panel with detailed and comprehensive documentation that was required for the accreditation process. For all these things, the DoE and University members should be commended. Everyone the Panel met with was very helpful and all have understood and accepted the requirements, the principles and objectives of the external accreditation process.

III. Study Programme Profile

The DoE offers undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral programmes. The Undergraduate programme leads to a Bachelor Degree in Economic Science. There are three postgraduate (Master Degree) programmes with 150 students and 11 doctoral students. Currently the DoE has approximately 4200 undergraduate students, which is a very large number, especially when compared to the number of faculty, which is only 23.

The scope of the undergraduate programme is to provide a general economics curriculum, taking into account the standards of similar good programmes in Greece, Europe and North America. The DoE provides a four-year degree programme, which includes economic theory (micro and macro), quantitative methods (mathematics, statistics and econometrics) and applied and field economic subjects. The curriculum was significantly revised in 2015-2016, and is continuously undergoing minor revisions and improvements. It is under ongoing monitoring from the QAU of the DoE. Proposals for changes and improvements are discussed yearly during formal staff meetings.

There are 42 required courses for the completion of the Bachelor Degree. Among these, 4 courses in a foreign language, 15 courses are compulsory and 23 are electives. To be awarded a Bachelor Degree in Economic Science a student must obtain 240 ECTS units. The curriculum is organized in 8 semesters. Each semester has 13 teaching weeks. All courses have four teaching hours per week. The workload in terms of readings, assessments, etc, for equivalent ECTS units is rather uniform across the various courses.

There are quite a lot of elective courses available to the students, primarily for the 3rd and 4th year of study. Students can also attend up to five elective courses from other Departments of the University and can substitute two elective courses with an undergraduate thesis.

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 Department of Economics of the University Macedonia has established a clearly-defined Quality Assurance (QA) policy that enables to identify the Department's mission and activities. The latter are communicated to students, faculty, staff and stakeholders. The QA policy has developed some key performance indicators (KPIs) with the actual results of the Department, the targets to fulfill, the methods and procedures and the persons or groups of persons in charge for each target. In 2014, the external evaluation Committee has underlined a series of necessary changes concerning the structure and the organization of the curriculum. Since this external evaluation, the curriculum has been substantially restructured and improved in order to accommodate most of the Committee's proposals.

A new study Programme has been implemented with mandatory courses delivered during the first 4 semesters, and with a quite large number of elective courses, not only from the DoE but also from other related Departments. In the new Programme, prerequisites have been added to some mandatory and elective courses. These are the main achievements of the Quality Assurance (QA) policy of the Department of Economics during the last 4 years.

These achievements are clearly documented in the QAP document and there is a permanent ongoing process of revision of the procedures and the programme to improve the undergraduate's curriculum.

Finally, it is worth emphasizing the fact that the administration services, the library, the student welfare and counseling units, seem to be doing their best to deliver their services in a very professional way.

Panel judgement

Principle 1: Institution Policy for Quality Assurance	
Fully compliant	✓
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

The QA policy has clearly identified the actual results, the future targets and the persons or groups of persons responsible for these improvements. At this stage, the Panel would encourage the Department to include in the Quality Assurance Policy procedures also the series of specific constraints that appear for each target and to develop new procedures that accommodate for them.

The panel also recommends that DoE with the support of the School or the University, should develop a peer-review system for supporting non-tenured academic and other teaching staff who obtain low student evaluation scores. At the same time, they should provide to teaching staff all the support needed to develop and sharpen their teaching skills.

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 programme has been carefully revised and substantially improved over the last 4 years. The new revised study program includes 42 different courses and is organized as follows:

- A series of mandatory courses (Macroeconomics, Microeconomics, Statistics, Mathematics and Accounting) which are delivered during the first 4 semesters.
- The students can choose among 4 foreign language courses (the student must choose at least 1); the number of courses of foreign languages has been reduced from 6 to 4 (English, French, German and Italian), according to the External Evaluation's suggestions.
- The students must choose 23 elective courses which have been divided in 3 categories :
 - Basic Economics (at least 6 courses)
 - Mainly Economics (at least 14 courses)
 - Other Departments' courses (maximum 5 courses)
- Firm managers and academics from other local and foreign Institutions are regularly invited to deliver seminars.

The programme has been designed to cover the needs of i) private firms, the public sector and other organizations, and ii) prepare the students for their graduate studies. Graduates have a good knowledge of the economic theory and can handle in a satisfactory way a series of economic tools (statistics, econometrics, computer science and computer programs, e-commerce, etc.). This study

programme is favorably compared with the relevant programs of good universities in Greece, Europe and North America. The learning outcomes of the study programme have been sufficiently discussed between the Department's staff. There is a clearly defined procedure in the DoE of annual examination of the study program and revision of it, if necessary. For the revision of the study program, the DoE considers the latest developments of the field and the market needs.

The Department's staff strongly encourages students to participate in the Internship. As a result, in the last 8 years, 878 students have practiced internship. However, they represent only 8% of the Department's students during this period. The reasons for such a low rate of internship seem to be on the one hand, the low public budget and on the other hand, the fact that most local private firms don't seem eager to participate in the Internship program.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

First, it seems important to introduce more field and applied courses in order to improve the students' adaptability to the needs of the labor market. One relatively easy way to achieve this is to allow students to take courses from other related Departments. Currently, students can take up to five courses from other Departments. We welcome this practice and we recommend that students are allowed to choose more elective courses from other related fields in other Departments. This could further promote academic knowledge and student preparation of job placement and further studies. However, one should note that important improvements have been achieved in this respect during the last four years.

Second, it could be interesting to create thematic groups of elective courses in order to provide students with a certain degree of specialization in a given field of economics (such as finance, international trade, transports and environment, regional planning, etc.). This would lead to a certain degree of specialization and could improve the chances of students for finding a job in the labor market, once they have finished their studies.

Third, the undergraduate programme currently has a dissertation in its curriculum. However, this is not compulsory. We recommend that the DoE encourage more students to write a dissertation and that this dissertation is presented in front of students and teaching staff. In this way, students will develop even further their writing and presentation skills, which are valuable for the employers and higher education institutions.

Fourth, during the panel's meeting with employers, some of them raised the issue of improvement in the English language and excel skills for the graduates. The DoE should consider ways to improve these skills. Currently the DoE offers some courses in English for the Erasmus students. Greek students are allowed, if they wish, to attend these courses. We applaud this practice and we recommend that the DoE offers more courses in English and encourage more students to attend them.

Finally, although the Department has strong links with its former students, private businesses and public organizations, it does not seem to discuss formally with them the content of the program curriculum. The Department could create an External Advisory Committee, which could suggest the adoption of some elective courses, by taking into account the trends and the current needs of the local, national and global labor markets.

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 Department benefits from a highly skilled level of freshmen. The Department ranks at the second place in the students' preferences in Economics in the National University entrance examinations. However, the Department also has to deal with the fact that it is obliged (from the State) to receive twice the number freshmen that it can accommodate (more than 400 per year). In order to deal with this problem and with the fact that classrooms have not been designed to accommodate such numbers, the DoE has decided to split the compulsory courses into two and deliver each lecture twice. This represents a strong commitment for teaching quality from the Department's staff.

The Department uses different modes of delivering knowledge when appropriate. Specifically, it offers homeworks, projects, midterm and final exams and oral presentations. Students in the third and fourth year of study can also attend research seminars that are regularly conducted by DoE teaching staff. The students benefit from diversity in learning environment with course offerings varying from traditional lectures, labs, practice sessions, to on-line access to course material, team projects, opportunities to practice internship etc. The syllabus of each course states clearly, what the assessment criteria for the course are.

By the end of each course, students are asked to complete a questionnaire, concerning the quality of the course and the instructor. The information collected is used to improve the learning outcome of the course. The feedback received from the students provides an input to the periodic curriculum update and teaching improvements. An overall feedback on the study programme is also obtained from graduates, at the time of graduation. This, however, is a very recent experience (2018) and the conclusions from this type of evaluation are limited.

Panel judgement

Principle 3: Student- centred Learning, Teaching an Assessment	
Fully compliant	✓
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

The Panel has two recommendations for consideration for further improving the student learning conditions.

First, there are a number of courses, which offer assessments in addition to course final examination. The Panel applaud this practice. However, this added features and the benefits they provide should be given to all students, by making the additional assessments compulsory. In addition, more teaching staff in more courses should adopt such additional assessments. This will ensure that more students get the benefits of these additional assessments and that all students get equal treatment by taking the same number of assessments.

Second, the panel is not aware if the DoE collects any information about incoming and outgoing Erasmus students. The DoE should contact surveys to get information needed to increase the benefits that students get from participating in the Erasmus exchange program.

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

A welcome week for freshmen has been inaugurated since 2018 in order to explain the aims and goals of the undergraduates' programme but also in order to accelerate their social integration in the University. The Department has adopted the "advisor" principle where each student can receive academic advice from faculty members throughout her/his studies.

Students find all available information about the programme, timetables, studies rules and procedures in the internet site of the Department.

The Department fully implements the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) across the whole curriculum of the Programme. The total load per year is 60 ECTS units and the Department's website contains a detailed guide for the description of courses of the study program.

Finally, the Department has accepted and co-signed the basic principles and conditions of the European Student Mobility Program for study and internship as well as the mobility of faculty members and administrative staff for training and teaching as outlined in the Erasmus Policy Statement. Some courses are delivered in English in order to attract Erasmus students but also in order to prepare the Department's students for participating to an Erasmus Exchange programme. However, while 413 Greek students participated in different Erasmus programmes only 183 foreign students came to the Department over the last few years.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The Erasmus programme should be explained in a clear way to students. Although, the Department has not the authority in dealing with the Erasmus programme, it seems necessary that the Department develop a clear communication on the advantages of the Erasmus programme and on the students' international 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

For compliance with Principle 5, the Panel has noted several points. On faculty recruitment, there are clear, transparent and fair processes in place. To attract competent and high quality candidates for opened positions, the DoE advertises job openings through traditional channels of the discipline, such as inomics.

On the professional development of the faculty, the DoE overs quite a few opportunities. There is research leave for all staff. Staff may apply for a research leave (Sabbatical) for up to six months for every three years of service, which can be accumulative. The DoE encourage research by providing funding to Faculty to participate up to two international conferences abroad and one domestic, which is compared favourably to the average in Greek universities, by funding the organization of international conference by its members, by establishing research prize for excellent publications etc. Because of these, the research output of the DoE is considered one of the best, among DoEs, in Greece.

The DoE gives staff the opportunity to teach in their respective specialized areas of expertise, and in this way provides a strong link between research and teaching. The staff is given equal chances to develop by being allocated the same number of courses and teaching workload. To help the junior staff to develop, DoE assigns them courses that are less time demanding.

At the end of each semester, students by completing the questionnaire, they evaluate the course and their instructor. The results of these evaluations are on average very good. To encourage quality teaching, the DoE has established teaching prizes. Lately, the DoE collects information from its graduates about the overall program quality and if it is up to its students expectations.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

For improving the teaching skills of the junior faculty and teaching staff, the University must establish a dedicated centre for teaching and learning that will offer specialized seminars and workshops.

The mobility of teaching staff should increase.

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 Panel has noted that the DoE has all the facilities needed to ensure appropriate teaching and learning environment and these facilities are sufficient for those students regularly attending lectures and seminars. However, even though the DoE splits all the required courses into two, if all registered students were to attend, the classrooms are not large enough to accommodate all them. The teaching facilities in use are equipped with all necessary technology and tools.

Administrative staff is qualified to support students and are highly dedicated to cater their needs. This was noted by the Panel during meetings with them, and stated by current and former students. It is worth mentioning that students have access to secretariat services from 7.00 to 16.00.

The students are well informed about the facilities and services provided by the DoE. The environment in the DoE is friendly and students are encouraged to meet regularly with the staff and academic advisors. This is facilitated by the regular presence of the faculty, a point also emphasized by current and former students. Members of the DoE advise students on a regular base about their current and future academic needs, and job market prospects.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The Panel has three recommendations for this principle.

First, since the capacity of the classrooms is limited, the University and the DoE should consider limiting the number of incoming students to a number that their teaching facilities can accommodate.

Second, in some computer labs, monitors and computers are rather old. The DoE should, consider, if possible, replacing them.

Third, the DoE should try to increase the number of its students participating in the Erasmus exchange program by accommodating them, providing more information and emphasizing the usefulness of the program.

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 DoE uses multiple sources to collect regularly data and feedback, from incoming and current students, graduates and employers. The DoE collects this information by requesting students to complete a questionnaire for each course, requesting graduating students to answer questions for the whole program and from employers and students participating in work practice. The purpose of these questionnaires is to obtain information about the achieved outcome of each course separately but also for the whole program. This information is used to improve the quality and learning achievement of each course, and the content and quality of the whole program curriculum. This will help students for their graduate studies and better place them in the job market.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The information management in place collects data from graduates and students on their learning experience and from employers on the quality of interns. It is advisable that the DoE develops an alumni base that enables the data collection of the former students and their current profile. In order to develop a better alumni base, the DoE and the University should consider the provision of a life-long email account to all students. Data collected from alumni, properly presented, can be used to increase even further the quality of incoming students.

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 Panel found that key information regarding the publicly available information is up to date, easily found on the departmental website, and that the course information is detailed. For example, course requirements, examination forms, and other useful information are readily available. The website also includes offered courses and their learning outcomes. The academic unit Policy for Quality Assurance and all published information is up to date and is available online, easily accessible and regularly updated.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

While the Panel finds this Principle fully compliant, one area that can be developed further is for all staff to have updated CVs. Staff webpages should include more and recent information on their individual current research interests, including any recent research paper. This would make faculty matching easier with other researchers in Greece or abroad, and with students that are planning to write an undergraduate dissertation. The DoE should consider replacing the paper questionnaire with electronic one. In some places, the English version of the webpage needs improvement.

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

There is a self-assessment procedure in the DoE that takes place annually. This procedure is conducted by the QAU in the DoE and shared with the DoE members and MODIP. The Panel noted that the undergraduate programme has changed substantially in 2015-16, following the recommendations of the external evaluation review that took place in 2014, and due to the changing needs of the market and the latest trends in the discipline. The revised program is in line with those in good Economics Departments of other Institutions in Greece, Europe and North America. There is ongoing regular monitoring of the learning resources and support services. Whenever the need arises, the DoE takes appropriate action for their improvement.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

While the QAU functions well, the Panel recommends that the content of all courses should continuously update to include current issues and developments of economic science.

PRINCIPLE 10: REGULAR EXTERNAL EVALUATION OF UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES

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

HQA is responsible for administrating the programme accreditation process which is realised as an external evaluation procedure, and implemented by a committee of independent experts. HQA 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

This is the second external evaluation of the study programme. The first evaluation took place in 2014. The DoE has been very active in implementing all feasible actions recommended by the first evaluation. The new study program is substantially improved and contains all the recommendations that were feasible to implement. For this accreditation, the Panel finds that the DoE, the QAU and the MODIP were extremely helpful in answering many questions and clarifying many aspects of the program.

During the Panel's visit to the Department facilities, the academic, scientific and administrative staff was readily available to answer all questions and to comment on all issues raised. This was an indication of their awareness of the importance of the accreditation process. Given the DoE's response to our presence and the discussion we have on various academic issues, the Panel is certain that the DoE will carefully respond to the recommendations found in this report.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The Panel recommends that the DoE use regularly the external evaluation procedure as a way to continuously update and improve the study programme.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

The Panel found evidence of good practice in quite a few areas of the study program of the DoE. The DoE has policies for quality assurance and these are well understood and implemented by the teaching and administrative staff. In the DoE there is good and supportive academic environment with good cooperation of staff in research and teaching activities. They continuously strive to excel in research and teaching. Sufficient attention is paid to student learning with all necessary resources made available. The DoE offers a large number of elective courses, some of them from related Departments, which can satisfy the needs of most students. To enhance the English language skill of its students, it offers additional specific English language courses, and its students are allowed to attend the courses offered for the Erasmus students. The DoE is a well-organized Department with clean and well-functioning facilities that are easily accessible to students.

II. Areas of Weakness

The Panel notes a few areas of weakness that should be given attention. First, student numbers have increased substantially and are putting pressure on existing facilities. The existing University facilities cannot accommodate all the incoming students, if all of them choose to attend. Second, the increased student numbers also put pressure on the available teaching resources, which need addressing by reducing the student-staff ratio. Third, the limited available state funding put pressure on the quantity and quality of teaching resources. Finally, research funding is limited, which affect adversely all aspects of teaching, research and faculty development. Hence, all these must be addressed.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

1. Reduce the student-faculty ratio. This can be achieved by reducing the annual number of incoming students and/or increase the number of teaching staff.
2. Increase the DoE and University funding to improve equipment and facilities.
3. The courses that have an additional component of assessment beyond the final exam should have that component made compulsory to all students. Further, such additional assessments should be adopted by more courses.
4. The undergraduate program has currently a dissertation, which is elective. We recommend that more student should be encourage to write a dissertation, and this dissertation be presented in front of students and teaching staff.
5. The program study should contain more elective courses. This can be achieved by including related courses selected from other Departments.
6. The DoE in cooperation with the School and or the University should adopt policies to support teaching staff to improve and sharpen their teaching skills.
7. The ration of incoming female to male students is rather small. The DoE should take measures to increase this ratio.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: Principles 1, 3, 4, 5. 6, 7, 8, 9. 10.
The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved is: Principle 2
The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are: none
The Principles where failure of compliance was identified are: none

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

The members of the Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname

Signature

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University of Cyprus, Cyprus
2. **Professor Michel Dimou**
University of Toulon, France
3. **Professor Nikias Sarafoglou**
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