



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



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Accreditation Report for the New Undergraduate Study Programme in operation of:

Agriculture

Institution: University of the Peloponnese

Date: 10 December 2022



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 HAHE to undertake the review of the New Undergraduate Study Programme in operation of **Agriculture** of the **University of the Peloponnese** 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 new undergraduate study programme in operation of **Agriculture** of the **University of the Peloponnese** comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

- 1. Prof. Constantin Vamvakas, Chair**
University of Ghent, Ghent, Belgium
- 2. Prof. Stella K. Kantartzi**
Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, IL, USA
- 3. Prof. Andreas Katsiotis**
Cyprus University of Technology, Limassol, Cyprus
- 4. Dr. Spyridon Stachtiaris**
Geotechnical Chamber of Greece, Athens, Greece
- 5. Ms. Aphrodite Lioliou**
International Hellenic University, Thessaloniki, Greece

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

The Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (HAHE) initiated the accreditation review process for the undergraduate program of the Department of Agriculture (DoA) of the University of the Peloponnese (UoP) by teleconference. Scheduled briefings and meetings were conducted efficiently without technical difficulties. Due to the time difference between Greece, Belgium, and the USA, all the meetings were held from the beginning of the afternoon until late at night.

Before the meetings, EEAP received the Proposal for Accreditation of DoA and other relevant material. Before starting the meetings with the DoA, the members of the EEAP met online to discuss the strategy and the issues to consider during the discussions, as well as the distribution of different tasks for each panel member.

The accreditation review started on December 5 at 6.30 pm Greek time, according to the schedule prepared by HAEE. The EEAP met with the UoP Vice-Rector, Prof. Ioannis Douvis, and the Department Head, Prof. Vassilis Demopoulos. The Vice Rector also serves as the President of the Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP). The EEAP was briefed on the history and academic profile of UoP; the Department Head presented a power point about the Department profile, its policy on quality assurance, and other issues related to the study program. In the next meeting, EEAP met with the representatives of Quality Assurance Policy DoA OMEA Epaminondas Kartsonas, Constantinos Delis, and Ioannis Lykoskoufis and the MODIP representatives Ioannis Douvis, Anna Asimakopoulou, and Anthi Papaporfiriou. EEAP discussed with these representatives the compliance of the undergraduate program (UP) to the standards for quality accreditation and other issues concerning the students' assignments, the theses, and the examination material.

The following day EEAP included six teleconference meetings with:

- Ten teaching staff members: Georgios Stathas, Professor; Dimitris Petropoulos, Associate Professor; Anastasios Kotsiras, Associate Professor; Alexis Alexopoulos, Associate Professor; Anastasios Darras, Associate Professor; Christos Mourotooglou, Lecturer; Alexandros Vithoulkas, Lecturer; Stavros Sotiropoulos, Applications Lecturer; Mary Kotsifaki, Applications Lecturer; and Despina Klironomou, Applications Lecturer. The main points of the discussion were: professional development opportunities, mobility, workload, student evaluations; competence and adequacy of the teaching staff to ensure learning outcomes; the link between teaching and research; teaching staff's involvement in applied research, projects, and research activities directly related to the program; and possible areas of weakness.
- Ten students of different semesters: 2 students from 1st semester; 2 students from 3rd semester; 5 students from 7th semester (President of the Students' Association included); 1 student from 9th semester (Agricultural Technologist). The discussions were mainly about their satisfaction with the study experience and the Department/Institution facilities, their involvement in quality assurance, and any issues concerning student life and welfare.

Following this meeting, EEAP discussed the administrating facilities with staff members Stavroula Babali, Ioannis Alevizos, and Niki Bouna. Then, the EEAP attended a live tour of the different laboratories and a presentation of the library by teaching staff members and the librarian.

The next meeting was with ten social partners from the public and social sector: Stathis Anastasopoulos, Vice Governor of the Regional Unit of Messinia, responsible for the agricultural sector; Panagiotis Mylonas, deputy general director of Benaki Phytopathological Institution; Anastasios Tsakonas, representative of the Geotechnical Chamber of Greece; Eleftherios Arvanitopoulos, quality manager LIDL HELLAS; Michalis Argyropoulos, agricultural technologist, partner of the fertilizer company COMPO EXPERT; Thanasis Kelmager, President of the Main Flower Market of Athens; Constantinos Bakasietas, representative of a vine nursery in Leontio Nemeas, Corinth; Ioannis Pazios, director of the Agricultural Cooperative of Messinia; Costas Bouloulis, agronomist, dealer of plant protection products, fertilizers, agricultural equipment; and Toula Vasilakou, olive oil producer.

The last two meetings took place with the OMEA and MODIP representatives, the Vice-Rector/President of MODIP, and the President of the Department, during which the members of EEAP made a short debriefing to reflect on the impressions of the discussions and their key findings. From December 7-10, the EEAP worked on the accreditation Report. All parties involved conducted themselves professionally, and the process was smooth, effective, and efficient.

Important note: The five years undergraduate program has only completed its first three years, with two completed during the COVID pandemic. Therefore, the EEAP conducted the evaluation and drew conclusions based on the experiences of the three-fifths of the program already completed, the documents provided regarding its strategic planning and studies program, and the discussions during the meetings.

III. New Undergraduate Study Programme in operation Profile

The DoA was established by law in 2019 (Law 4610/2019). It was the re-embodiment of two Technical Educational Institutions (TEI): The TEI of Peloponnese (2013-2019) and the TEI Kalamatas (1998-2013). It is situated 6 km out of the town of Kalamata. It comprises sections on different scientific subjects and has an excellent building infrastructure, well-equipped laboratories, and several open-air areas. It belongs to the category 0819 Agriculture of the UNESCO categorization scientific fields (ISCED 2013). The DoA's mission is to provide high-quality, university-level education in agronomy and agronomical technology and promote science and technology through basic, translational research. The DoA offers education in three cycles: undergraduate, postgraduate, and Ph.D. levels in theoretical and basic research.

The Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs determines the number of incoming students yearly. The total number of registered undergraduate students is 1386 (including those 584 that registered before 2019 in transition from the two TEIs of Peloponnese and Kalamata). There are graduate students and seven Ph.D. candidates studying in the Department.

The program offers an intergraded MSc degree (National and European Qualifications Framework level 7) within ten semesters (5 years), requiring a total of 300 ECTS. Based on the data received, 48 out of 53 courses are mandatory, and five out of 21 are electives. The curriculum is organized into two groups of classes (General ECTS)/technical background (ECTS) and agricultural specialization (ECTS). Integral parts of the curriculum are the diploma thesis (30 ECTS).

Today, the DoA comprises 28 Faculty members (22 DEP and six EDIP), four special technical laboratory personnel (Etep), and three administrative staff members. The permanent educational staff covers 94% of the academic work (255h out of 270h per week).

Between 2018 and 2022, 146 publications were presented by 22 members of the staff.

The DoA includes five institutionalized laboratories:

- Agricultural economy, development, and business
- Floriculture and landscape architecture
- Applied vegetable science
- Biotechnological applications
- Kalamata's sensory lab of olive oil

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

Principle 1: Strategic Planning, Feasibility and Sustainability of the Academic Unit

Institutions must have developed an appropriate strategy for the establishment and operation of new academic units and the provision of new undergraduate study programmes. This strategy should be documented by specific feasibility and sustainability studies.

By decision of the institutional Senate, the Institutions should address in their strategy issues related to their academic structure in academic units and study programmes, which support the profile, the vision, the mission, and the strategic goal setting of the Institution, within a specific time frame. The strategy of the Institution should articulate the potential benefits, weaknesses, opportunities or risks from the operation of new academic units and study programmes, and plan all the necessary actions towards the achievement of their goals.

The strategy of their academic structure should be documented by specific feasibility and sustainability studies, especially for new academic units and new study programmes.

More specifically, the feasibility study of the new undergraduate study programmes should be accompanied by a four-year business plan to meet specific needs in infrastructure, services, human resources, procedures, financial resources, and management systems.

During the evaluation of the Institutions and their individual academic units in terms of meeting the criteria for the organisation of undergraduate study programmes, particular attention must be placed upon:

a. The academic profile and the mission of the academic unit

The profile and mission of the department should be specified. The scientific field of the department should be included in the internationally established scientific fields of Higher Education, as they are designated by the international categorisation of scientific fields in education, by UNESCO (ISCED 2013).

b. The strategy of the Institution for its academic development

The academic development strategy for the operation of the department and the new study programme should be set out. This strategy should result from the investigation of the factors that influence the studies and the research in the scientific field, the investigation of the institutional, economic, developmental, and social parameters that apply in the external environment of the Institution, as well as the possibilities and capabilities that exist within the internal environment (as reflected in a SWOT Analysis: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats). This specific analysis should demonstrate the reason for selecting the scientific field of the new department.

c. The documentation of the feasibility of the operation of the department and the study programme

The feasibility of the operation of the new department should be justified based on:

- *the needs of the national and regional economy (economic sectors, employment, supply-demand, expected academic and professional qualifications)*
- *comparison with other national and international study programmes of the same scientific field*
- *the state-of-the-art developments*

- *the existing academic map; the differentiation of the proposed department from the already existing ones needs to be analysed, in addition to the implications of the current image of the academic map in the specific scientific field.*

d. The documentation of the sustainability of the new department

Mention must be made to the infrastructure, human resources, funding perspective, services, and all other available resources in terms of:

- *educational and research facilities (buildings, rooms, laboratories, equipment, etc.)*
- *staff (existing and new, by category, specialty, rank and laboratory). A distinct five-year plan is required, documenting the commitment of the School and of the Institution for filling in the necessary faculty positions to cover at least the entire pre-defined core curriculum*
- *funding (funding possibility from public or non-public sources)*
- *services (central, departmental / student support, digital, administrative, etc.)*

e. The structure of studies

The structure of the studies should be briefly presented, namely:

- **The organisation of studies:** *The courses and the categories to which they belong; the distribution of the courses into semesters; the alignment of the courses with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).*
- **Learning process:** *Documentation must be provided as to how the student-centered approach is ensured (modes of teaching and evaluation of students beyond the traditional methods).*
- **Learning outcomes:** *Knowledge, skills and competences acquired by graduates, as well as the professional rights awarded must be mentioned.*

f. The number of admitted students

- *The proposed number of admitted students over a five-year period should be specified.*
- *Any similar departments in other HEIs with the possibility of student transfers from / to the proposed department should be mentioned.*

g. Postgraduate studies and research

- *It is necessary to indicate research priorities in the scientific field, the opportunities for interdisciplinary research, the challenges towards new knowledge, possible research collaborations, etc.*
- *In addition, the postgraduate and doctoral programmes offered by the academic unit, the research projects performed, and the research performance of the faculty members should be mentioned.*

Relevant documentation

- *Introductory Report by the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) addressing the above points with the necessary documentation*
- *Updated Strategic Plan of the Institution that will include its proposed academic reconstruction, in view of the planned operation of new department(s) (incl. updated SWOT analysis at institutional level)*
- *Feasibility and sustainability studies for the establishment and operation of the new academic unit and the new study programme*
- *Four-year business plan*

Study Programme Compliance

a. The academic profile and the mission of the academic unit

The DoA of the UoP was established in 2019 (under Law 4610, published in the Government Gazette Number 70, First issue, May 7, 2019); however, the Department has more than 30 years of history since it was first established in 1989 (Presidential Decree published at the Government Gazette Number 215/B/3-10-1989) as the Technological Educational Institute (TEI) of Kalamata, and later, by combining the Department of Crop Production and the Department of Organic Greenhouse Crops and Floriculture into the DoA Technology (Presidential Decree published at the Government Gazette Number 131, First issue, June 3, 2013), evolved into the Educational Institute of Peloponnese. It is worth mentioning that both programs were accredited by external evaluation committees of the Hellenic Quality Assurance Agency for Higher Education in 2011 and 2012, respectively.

The Department's primary mission is to provide a comprehensive education for undergraduate students in Plant Sciences. The curriculum has been developed, considering the latest requirements for educating plant scientists, based on the teaching and professional experience of the existing faculty members after consulting national and international study programs of corresponding departments, adapted for the regional conditions of Peloponnese. The Department has accepted its first students, under the new five-year program, during the academic year 2019-2020. The previous four-years program concluded during the academic year 2021-2022. However, undergraduate students enrolled in the last four-years curriculum were given a choice to continue for another extra year and be awarded a University degree.

The Department has procedures to get feedback and update its curriculum so that it can be continuously adapted to meet the changing needs of the Agricultural profession.

The scientific field of the Department is included in the internationally established area of "Agriculture" (081) of Higher Education, as they are designated by the international categorization of scientific fields in education by UNESCO (ISCED 2013).

b. The strategy of the Institution for its academic development

According to the published Strategic and Operational Development Plan for 2022-2025, the UoP seeks to develop its relations with the local community, to contribute to the response of the social, cultural, and development needs of the region, and to constitute lever of its development, spreading scientific knowledge; at the same time Internalization is a top priority. The strategic academic development of the DoA and the new undergraduate program is harmonized with the strategic planning of the UoP through the curriculum, the research, the staff, student mobility, and above all, the connection to the local society.

One of the main reasons for the UoP to include in its Strategic and Operational Development and to support the academic development of the DoA in Kalamata is the fact that the whole area is an agricultural producing area, cultivated with added value crops such as olives, greenhouse vegetables, dried figs, processed tomato, etc. Furthermore, this is the sole Agriculture Department in the whole Region of Peloponnese.

Part of the Department's research strategy is connected to the problems the local agricultural production sector faces. The funded project “Στρατηγική της διαχείρισης της ασθένειας του γλοιοσπορίου στην ελαιοκαλλιέργεια στην Περιφέρεια Πελοποννήσου” MIS 5046086 funded through ΕΣΠΑ 2014-20 with a total budget of 730 k€, is an example of such an activity. Another part of the research is the collection, characterization, and maintenance of local landraces, such as tomato ‘Χοντροκατσαρή’ and beans ‘Μαυρομάτικο’ and ‘Πηχιάτικο.’ These are just a few examples of the interconnection between society and the Department's research projects. Thus, the students can learn problem-solving procedures and develop critical thinking.

According to a SWOT analysis of the Department, several Strengths are listed, including the existing infrastructures (i.e., buildings, greenhouses, fields), the sufficient number of academic staff, the communication between students and academic staff (verified by the students during the interviews), the secured professional rights of the graduates, the geographical position of the Department, the inclusion of the Department under the umbrella of the UoP, the presence of the library in the nearby building. As weaknesses, the following are mentioned: absence of specific specialization of academic staff, low percentage of students’ presence in classes (theory), and low numbers in students and staff mobility. The opportunities present for the development of the Department include the working possibilities currently in the region of Peloponnese for the graduates (since the area has a growing agricultural sector), the direct and ease of communication with the agricultural sector, and additional funding from the private sector is possible. Finally, the threats mentioned include the low levels of recognition from the society of the role of the agronomists, the continuous changes in the operational framework (i.e., national entrance examinations minimum score), and the low levels of yearly governmental funding.

c. The documentation of the feasibility of the operation of the department and the study program

The agriculture sector is an essential part of the Greek economy. More specifically, in the region of Peloponnese, agriculture contributes to economic development and growth since many modern organized agricultural units exist (i.e., greenhouses in Messenia, Ilia, wineries in Argolida, and elsewhere, nurseries, olive groves, olive mills).

The curriculum under accreditation took into consideration other national and international study programs. Thus, compared to other similar departments, the Department offers a flexible curriculum with many elective courses (21 courses of choice), offering in-depth courses in individual academic subjects, mainly in the last two years of studies.

The Department presents a study program integrating state-of-the-art developments with particular emphasis on agricultural production, such as sustainable crop management (rotation systems, organic agriculture, certified production, rational use of fertilizers, comprehensive fight against enemies and diseases, mechanization of cultivation care with use of modern technologies), precision agriculture applications, plant cultivation with modern hydroponic systems.

d. The documentation of the sustainability of the new department

Educational and research facilities

The Department is housed in the UoP building facilities on an area of 105 acres in Antikalamos, about 6 km from the centre of Kalamata. Almost all the University's premises (i.e., library, elevators, central entrances) are accessible to people with disabilities.

The Department has access to nine (9) air-conditioned classrooms (40–100-person capacity) with the necessary electronic. It also has eighteen (18) laboratory spaces to realize the laboratory exercises, the support of the degree theses students, and research activities. Each laboratory is adequately equipped. The Department has twelve (12) greenhouses covering a total area of 2,200 m², three (3) of which (600 m²) are fully equipped with control systems for environmental conditions and procedures for hydroponic production, as well as insect nursery. An experimental farm with an orchard, olive trees, vines, and space for annual crops is also available.

Staff

The Department is supported by three administrative employees. During the 2021-2022 academic year, the Department had 22 academic staff, from which four Professors, seven Associate Professors, one Assistant Professor, one Lecturer, and nine Application Lecturers. There are also six Laboratory Teaching Staff and four Special Technical Staff. According to the five-year plan, at least one new academic staff position is forecasted for the academic year 2024-2025, and the two positions that are expected to retire will be replaced.

Funding

The Ministry of Education provides funding for the staff upon approval of the regular budget of the Foundation. Additional funding is provided by the Department's research grants and training programs.

Services

The library provides service support for the Department, the Central Secretariat of Student Affairs and Support, the IT department, the Student Residence, the restaurant, and the canteen.

e. The structure of studies

Organization of studies

Since the academic year 2019-20, the Department has offered a five-year (10 academic semesters) program, which leads to the accumulation of a minimum of 300 European credit units (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System - ECTS) and awards a degree in Agriculture. Of a total of 53 courses, 48 are mandatory, and the remaining five are selected from 20 electives. At least 36 courses also include lab sessions. Of the 300 ECTS, 260 are awarded through the courses, 30 from the dissertation, and the other ten from the compulsory practical training.

Learning process

A student-centered approach is ensured (beyond the traditional methods of teaching and evaluating students) based on the application for accreditation. Some key elements include: many lab sessions oblige students to be present and actively participate, practical training is compulsory, use of e-platforms, many elective courses, optional mid-term exams, individual or group presentations on specific topics, alternative ways of examination for students having learning disabilities, ability to participate in on-going research projects, and based on the course evaluation targeted corrective actions.

Learning outcomes

After completion of the curriculum, students should have acquired the following skills, knowledge, and competencies: professional expertise in the field of plant production and decision-making in related subjects of plant sciences, including plant protection, variety selection, use, and implementation of state-of-the-art agricultural practices. A complete list is presented in the accreditation application.

f. The number of admitted students

The number of admitted students each year is set and proposed by the Department's Council to the Ministry of Education; however, the Ministry decides the final number. The total number of incoming students for year 2019 were 243, for 2020 were 236, for 2021 were 72, for 2022 90 and an estimation for 2023 is 85, for 2024 is 100, and for 2025 is 130.

Currently, the Department can accept student transfer applications from the following universities: International Hellenic University, Western Macedonia University, Ioannina University, University of Patras, Hellenic Mediterranean University, and the DoA-Agrotechnology of the University of Thessaly.

g. Postgraduate studies and research

At present, the DoA and the Department of Management Science and Technology of the UoP operate an Interdepartmental Postgraduate Program of Studies (P.M.S.) with the title "Organization and Management of Businesses in the Agri-food Sector-M.B.A. in Agri-food sector" since the academic year 2021-2022. The Department states that it is planning to develop a Postgraduate program taking into consideration the following:

- The profile and mission of the Department in the field of higher education, especially in the Peloponnese Region
- The need to carry out research in collaboration with the Peloponnese Region and the productive agencies of the region to solve local problems
- The need to achieve the Department's goal of expanding the research activity and collaborations at the national and international level

The Department currently has seven (7) Ph.D. candidates and three (3) post-docs.

The research priorities set mainly concern meeting the region's needs and further development and modernization of applied agriculture with particular emphasis on the Peloponnese Region. The goal is to establish the application of methods for economical, integrated, and sustainable production.

Findings

All necessary steps and procedures have been followed by the UoP and the DoA. The Department's profile and mission are specified; its strategy is set out; complete feasibility documentation for its operation and sustainability is provided; the structure of the studies is presented. Nevertheless, the following points raised by MODIP are still pending:

- Incomplete information regarding the curriculum and on the Department's website to the interested parties (pupils, students, graduates, etc.). Limited information regarding the Department in the English language.
- No job opportunities for graduates' employment are available.
- No graduate employment and satisfaction questionnaires to all parties involved (students, teaching and administrative staff, employers, collaborating stakeholders, etc.).
- There is no established procedure for utilizing student performance data that are drawn from the OPESP platform.

Analysis

All the points raised in the current Principle 1 were well documented and supported by the accompanying documents, and further explanations were provided during the teleconference interviews. A new website for the UoP is under construction, which will also include all relevant information for the DoA.

Conclusions

The four points mentioned in the Findings section should be seriously considered and be resolved according to a strict timetable.

Panel Judgement

Principle 1: Strategic planning, feasibility and sustainability of the academic unit	
a. The academic profile and the mission of the academic unit	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
b. The strategy of the Institution for its academic development	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
c. The documentation of the feasibility of the operation of the department and the study programme	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
d. The documentation of the sustainability of the new department	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
e. The structure of studies	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
f. The number of admitted students	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

g. Postgraduate studies	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Principle 1: Strategic planning, feasibility and sustainability of the academic unit (overall)	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- Improve the existing website by adding all the missing information and build-up the English version
- Include a section in the Students' Guide, after the presentation of the academic staff, with areas of research of the personnel
- Include in the Students' Guide the role and importance of the Academic Advisor, as well as the psychological support provided if needed

Principle 2: Quality Assurance Policy of the Institution and the Academic Unit

The Institution should have in place an accredited Internal Quality Assurance System, and should formulate and apply a Quality Assurance Policy, which is part of its strategy, specialises in the operation of the new academic units and the new study programmes, and is accompanied by annual quality assurance goals for the continuous development and improvement of the academic units and the study programmes.

The quality assurance policy of the Institution must be formulated in the form of a published statement, which is implemented by all stakeholders. It focuses on the achievement of special annual quality goals related to the quality assurance of the new study programme offered by the academic unit. In order to implement this policy, the Institution, among others, commits itself to put into practice quality procedures that will demonstrate: the adequacy and quality of the academic unit's resources; the suitability of the structure and organisation of the curriculum; the appropriateness of the qualifications of the teaching staff; the quality of support services of the academic unit and its staffing with appropriate administrative personnel. The Institution also commits itself to conduct an annual internal evaluation of the new undergraduate programme (UGP), realised by the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG) in collaboration with the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) of the Institution.

The quality assurance policy of the academic unit includes its commitment to implement quality procedures that will demonstrate: a) the adequacy of the structure and organisation of the curriculum, b) the pursuit of learning outcomes and qualifications in accordance with the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education, c) the promotion of the quality and effectiveness of the teaching work, d) the adequacy of the qualifications of the teaching staff, e) the promotion of the quality and quantity of the research work of the members of the academic unit, f) the ways of linking teaching with research, g) the level of demand for graduates' qualifications in the labour market, h) the quality of support services, such as administration, libraries and student care, i) the implementation of an annual review and audit of the quality assurance system of the UGP through the cooperation of the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG) with the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) of the Institution.

Relevant documentation

- *Revised Quality Assurance Policy of the Institution*
- *Quality Assurance Policy of the academic unit*
- *Quality target setting of the Institution and the academic unit (utilising the S.M.A.R.T. methodology)*

Study Programme Compliance

The UoP has established a MODIP to define the review processes clearly and oversee improvement efforts. The DoA has established an OMEA that the MODIP monitors. The University has a published Quality Assurance Policy (QAP). According to the University, the purpose of the quality policy is the continuous and systematic assurance, improvement, and strengthening of the quality of all its components. This policy includes specific quality assurance actions, intending to create a framework within which its academic and

administrative units must operate. A flow chart is presented in the published QAP by the University. The implementation of this policy is expected to:

- Enhance the prestige and international recognition of all the degrees awarded by the University
- Strengthening the quality of academic activities to improve student performance
- Increasing the satisfaction and trust of the agencies, stakeholders, and society towards the gain of knowledge, abilities, and skills of the Institute's graduates
- Improvement of the competitive position of the University in relation to other national and international Universities with similar curricula
- Strengthening the quality and quantity of research actions of the University
- Strengthening the culture of quality within the University

The DoA QAP focuses on continuous improvement of the quality of study programs and education, as well as carrying out research in full compliance with the rules and codes of ethics in an ever-changing society. Furthermore, a Quality Assurance Policy at the Departmental level is fully harmonized with the University's quality policy. The Department's quality assurance policy is presented in detail in the Handbook of Quality of the Department and is published on its website. Also, the quality assurance policy is made public to the Department's academic and administrative staff and its students to assume their responsibilities and initiative.

Quality targets set by the University and the Department are published utilizing the S.M.A.R.T. methodology.

Findings

The UoP has established a MODIP that monitors the DoA and OMEA. Each entity has published QAPs.

Analysis

The UoP and the DoA comply with Principle 2 and have published Quality Assurance Policies.

Conclusions

Quality assurance policies are in effect.

Panel Judgement

Principle 2: Quality assurance policy of the Institution and the academic unit	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

Set qualitative and quantitative goals in accordance with the strategic plan based on the key elements that are well described, are concise and comprehensible

Principle 3: Design, Approval and Monitoring of the Quality of the New Undergraduate Programmes

Institutions should design the new 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.

The Institutions develop their new undergraduate study programmes, following a well-defined procedure. The academic profile, the identity 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 European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education are described at this stage. An important new element in the structure of the programmes is the introduction of courses for the acquisition of digital skills. The above components should be taken into consideration and constitute the subject of the programme design, which, among other things, should include: elements of the Institution's strategy, labour market data and employment prospects of graduates, smooth progression of students throughout the stages of the programme, the anticipated student workload according to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), the option of providing work experience to the students, the linking of teaching and research, the international experience in study programmes of similar disciplines, the relevant regulatory framework, and the official procedure for the approval of the programme by the Institution.

The procedure of approval or revision of the programmes provides for the verification of compliance with the basic requirements of the Standards by the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU).

Relevant documentation

- *Senate decision for the establishment of the UGP*
- *Curriculum structure: courses, course categories (including courses for the acquisition of digital skills), ECTS awarded, expected learning outcomes according to the EQF, internship, mobility opportunities.*
- *Labour market data regarding the employment of graduates, international experience in a related scientific field.*
- *Student Guide*
- *Course outlines*
- *Teaching staff (list of areas of specialisation, its relation to the courses taught, employment relationship)*
- *QAU minutes for the internal evaluation of the new study programme and its compliance with the Standards*

Study Programme Compliance

The Senate of the UoP has decided on its 155th Meeting, July 26, 2019, to approve the UGP for the DoA.

A Student Guide for the DoA, UoP undergraduate students, was published in 2021. In the Student Guide, the structure of the Department is described, including the infrastructure, the administrative system, the research activities, and the students' educating opportunities (ERASMUS, practical training). Also, the academic staff is presented along with their teaching and research expertise. Finally, the general learning skills, the professional rights of the graduates, the requirements for obtaining the degree, the structure and breakdown of the courses for each semester, the compulsory practical training, and the dissertation are also presented. The Study Guide also includes a detailed/standardized analytical description of each course offered by the Department. Five courses are listed in the curriculum that provides digital skills to the students.

Overall, the undergraduate study program curriculum is well-articulated and comprehensive. The Department offers a 5-year program of undergraduate studies. The current undergraduate program has been in effect since the 2019-2020 academic year. The ECTS system is applied across the curriculum, and one ECTS corresponds to 25 hours of student involvement. The strengths of the undergraduate program lie in the spectrum of fields covered in teaching and research, as well as in the integration of fieldwork and practical training. Links between research and education in the undergraduate program do exist. Mobility opportunities are also presented in the Students Guide.

The section "Professional Rights of Graduates of the DoA" lists many employment possibilities and further educational opportunities. The Student Guide is considered complete providing answers to all possible questions that an undergraduate student might have.

Findings

All necessary steps and procedures have been followed by the UoP and the DoA. A Complete Students' Guide has been developed and is accessible to the students and public.

Analysis

The Students' Guide is comprehensive and all relevant information concerning infrastructure, administration, academic staff and their expertise, student opportunities (ERASMUS) and responsibilities (i.e., practical training and dissertation), and a detailed description of all courses are provided.

Conclusions

The design of the new undergraduate program is comprehensive and has been approved by the MODIP of the UoP (March 29, 2022). All procedures are monitored for their quality.

Panel Judgement

Principle 3: Design, approval and monitoring of the quality of the new undergraduate programmes	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- Include the Students' Guide quantitative comparisons to similar curricula in renowned global programs to meet self-imposed requirements for excellence and enhance its reputation
- Stabilize the number of incoming students
- Consult with key stakeholders and external partners for future changes in the curriculum

Principle 4: Student-centred Approach in Learning, Teaching and Assessment of Students

The academic unit should ensure that the new 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.

In the implementation of student-centered learning and teaching, the academic unit:

- ✓ *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 application of 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*

Relevant documentation

- *Questionnaires for assessment by the students*
- *Regulation for dealing with students' complaints and appeals*
- *Regulation for the function of the academic advisor*
- *Reference to the planned teaching modes and assessment methods*

Study Programme Compliance

The Faculty uses various learning approaches and communication methods associated with their course instruction. They utilize available electronic technology in class to deliver the material, including the e-class system, presentations, case studies, group work, projects, and e-mail communication as indicated in examined course outline samples. Additionally, laboratory courses complement and consolidate classroom knowledge. Moreover, teaching methods include activities in the Department's greenhouses and teaching farm, opportunities to engage in laboratory research, and field trips in selected courses.

The biggest problem that the Department faces concerning teaching is that a deficient number of students attend the lecture sections and, more specifically, the theoretical courses. From the student's point of view, the problem is that most students are obliged to work due to financial difficulties.

There are various approaches to evaluating student performance, such as examinations, class projects, presentations, and case studies. The course assessment criteria and methods are known in advance and contained in the course outlines available on the e-class platform. There are provisions to accommodate students with learning disabilities for testing, and instructors try to give feedback to the students and, if necessary, offer advice on the learning process. Course evaluation procedures are in the process of being carried out electronically.

Nevertheless, a very low level of student participation (10%) in course assessment was found. This fact leads to ineffective results in the re-evaluation and adjustment of course content and delivery approaches based on student feedback. This is an obstacle that the Department must address and resolve.

The Faculty is accessible and available for personal communication with their students. Student representatives participate in the General Assembly of the Department and expose their concerns, positions, and complaints.

Of particular importance is the institution of the Academic Adviser. Their role is well communicated to students, who were aware of such a function. Also, any student can report their problems or complaints to the Department Head, appropriate committees, or the General Assembly. A student complaint procedure covers most of the academic and administrative issues. The Liaison Office provides specialized counselling support for students with physical or learning disabilities.

All in all, we firmly believe that not only the curriculum but also the Faculty approach reflects a student-centered learning and teaching process. This student-centered approach is practiced and manifested in the learning processes, the support mechanisms, in the classroom environment, and outside of it in formal or casual encounters between the students and staff. The Faculty and staff take pride in the pleasant, friendly, and mutually respectful relationship with the students. Our discussions with the current students showed that the permanent teaching faculty are primarily accessible and responsive to the student's needs.

Findings

The Faculty members use various learning approaches and communication methods associated with their course instruction.

Analysis

Course evaluation procedures are being carried out electronically, but a very low level of student participation in course assessment was found. The role of the Academic Adviser is well communicated to students, who are aware of such function. The Liaison Office provides specialized counselling support for students with physical or learning disabilities.

Conclusions

The design of the new undergraduate program and the Faculty members' approach reflect a student-centered learning and teaching process.

Panel Judgement

Principle 4: Student-centred approach in learning, teaching and assessment of students	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- Implement strategies to increase student participation in course evaluations. A potential student premium could improve the participation rate
- Improve student engagement and attendance using alternative lecture formats such as mandatory connection with laboratory lessons, student presentations, and group discussions

Principle 5: Student Admission, Progression, Recognition of Academic Qualifications and Award of Degrees and Certificates of Competence of the New Study Programmes

Academic units should develop and apply published regulations addressing all aspects and phases of studies of the programme (admission, progression, recognition and degree award).

All the issues from the beginning to the end of studies should be governed by the internal regulations of the academic units. Indicatively:

- ✓ *the registration procedure of the admitted students and the necessary documents - according to the law - and the support of the newly admitted students*
- ✓ *student rights and obligations, and monitoring of student progression*
- ✓ *internship issues, granting of scholarships*
- ✓ *the procedures and terms for writing the thesis (diploma or degree)*
- ✓ *the procedure of award and recognition of degrees, the duration of studies, the conditions for progression and assurance of the progress of students in their studies*

as well as

- ✓ *the terms and conditions for enhancing student mobility*

Appropriate recognition procedures rely on relevant academic practice for recognition of credits among various European academic departments and Institutions in line with the principles of the Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region. 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).

All the above must be made public within the context of the Student Guide.

Relevant documentation

- *Internal regulation for the operation of the new study programme*
- *Regulation of studies, internship, mobility and student assignments*
- *Printed Diploma Supplement*

Certificate from the President of the academic unit that the diploma supplement is awarded to all graduates without exception together with the degree or the certificate of completion of studies

Study Programme Compliance

The EEAP had virtual meetings with several faculty members, staff, and students of the Undergraduate Program on Agriculture of the UoP to discuss the ongoing situation and future dynamics. During the two-day meetings, all the discussions revealed the dedication of the employees to students' training, the high potential of the program's success, and the unreserved support by the stakeholders. Nevertheless, the evaluation panel expected a

thorough presentation of the undergraduate program that would summarize all the essential information and secure the accuracy of the current report.

Incoming students are primarily admitted from the General and Professional Lyceums through Panhellenic Exams, and the UoP has partial control over the yearly number of admitted students. All incoming students are successfully enrolled in the 1st year of the program via <https://eregister.it.minedu.gov.gr>. It has yet to become known whether the program has welcomed any transfer students from other Hellenic Agriculture Programs in recent years. Nevertheless, any undergraduate degree holders can be admitted to the program through advanced placement exams and are enrolled in the 1st semester when they possess a non-relevant discipline degree; the 3rd semester when they possess a semi-relevant discipline degree; and 5th semester when they possess a relevant discipline degree. After completing the required enrolment process, incoming students receive instructions on accessing the University services via the University's site at <https://agro.uop.gr/protoeteisfoitites>. The Department website generally provides limited information about the studies, its mission, and its vision.

During their studies, students have access to free meals and low-cost accommodation facilities, special educational, counselling, psychological, and legal support, and a medical treatment facility. Gym facilities were described as obsolete and, thus, require an overall remodelling. The program also supports student mobility and participation in professional activities; however, only a few students take advantage of ERASMUS+, which will probably change as the new program further matures in the following years. Students attain practical training through lab/greenhouse/field work and summer internships. Field trips are minimal due to financial difficulties and security policies. An undergraduate thesis is mandatory, and a final examination committee assures content quality.

Findings

The undergraduate program on Agriculture at the UoP is fully supported by the Faculty, staff, students, and stakeholders.

Analysis

All procedures and set guidelines are closely followed, but there is much room for improvement in terms of student studies' quality and life.

Conclusions

The potential for future success is quite high if the recommended modifications are fulfilled.

Panel Judgement

Principle 5: Student admission, progression, recognition of academic qualifications, and award of degrees and certificates of competence of the new study programmes	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- Organize orientation seminars for incoming and transfer students
- Improve the website, adding adequate information about the area, program, facilities, research activities and accomplishments, and global engagement
- Recognize Faculty, staff, and student successes with press releases
- Enhance student engagement and participation in local, national, and international professional development activities (i.e., seminars/webinars, stakeholder events, ERASMUS+ network program)
- Attract funds for renovating gym facilities

Principle 6: Ensuring the Competence and High Quality of the Teaching Staff of the New Undergraduate Study Programmes

Institutions should assure themselves of the competence, the level of knowledge and skills of the teaching staff of the academic units, and apply fair and transparent processes for their recruitment, training and further development.

The Institution should attend to the adequacy of the teaching staff of the academic unit, the appropriate staff-student ratio, the suitable categories of staff, the appropriate subject areas and specialisations, the fair and objective recruitment process, the high research performance, the training – development, the staff development policy (including participation in mobility schemes, conferences and educational leaves- as mandated by law).

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

Relevant documentation

- *Procedures and criteria for teaching staff recruitment*
- *Regulations or employment contracts, and obligations of the teaching staff*
- *Policy for staff recruitment, support and development*
- *Performance of the teaching staff in scientific-research and teaching work, also based on internationally recognised systems of scientific evaluation (e.g., Google Scholar, Scopus, etc.)*

Study Programme Compliance

Most faculty members had corresponding appointments to the TEI of Kalamata and TEI of Peloponnese and transferred to the Department. All faculty members carry qualifying doctoral degrees. The Faculty is assisted by temporary hires, known as ‘407 plan’ and “Academic experience” appointments. Those appointees also have a doctoral degree. The permanent Faculty cover 94% of the educational work (255 of 270 hours per week).

The Department organizes and follows clear, transparent, and fair procedures for selecting the appropriate staff and provides conditions of employment concerning the importance of teaching and research, as determined by relevant laws and regulations. The number and specialties of the teaching staff are adequate to teach the curriculum courses.

The Department consists of 22 full-time Faculty members, of which four are Full Professors, seven Associate Professors, and 11 Assistant Professors (Lectures). The Faculty is actively involved in teaching and research. Based on the Scopus citation index from 2018 to 2022, the

total number of published papers is 144, and the citations are 2.021. Moreover, the Faculty members were involved in 25 book chapters, 24 teaching notes, and 652 conference papers; however, some of the Faculty members have a notable research activity with a plethora of publications, while others have much lower.

The Department encourages scholarly activity and innovative research by encouraging students to do project work. Towards this direction, the Department moved the research work course from elective to core courses. Notably, 25 students from 2019 to 2022 participated in research projects. This collaboration resulted in 20 published papers and 14 conference papers.

The ratio of students to faculty members is, on average, 63 as far as theoretical courses are concerned and 44 for practical classes, which is considered very high. The goal of the Department is to reach the number of 25 students per faculty member.

The Department offers opportunities for professional development to all Faculty members. They are expected to be active in research and provided funding to travel to conferences to present their work and interact with other colleagues to remain current in their research and the fast-changing technology bringing back extra value to the Department.

It should be noted that the Department's focus on applied research, strong affiliations with local stakeholders, and legacy in agricultural science and technology excellence were met with an overwhelming endorsement by student applicants. Most Faculty members have enough time to participate in and organize research programs following the strategic plan, which has been focused primarily on greenhouse crop production techniques, vegetable crop production, and olives and olive oil sensory. According to provided information, the Faculty members from 2012 to 2022 were involved in 21 research programs and 11 collaborations with institutes.

Overall, the mobility of Faculty members could be better, mainly with universities and institutes abroad. However, some faculty members are well-travelled (conferences, cooperative projects), while others are not. A concerted effort must be made to cultivate this culture in the Department so that all Faculty members can travel abroad and interact with colleagues at other institutes.

Our discussions with representatives of industry specialists and entrepreneurs indicated that, in general, they have enthusiastically endorsed the contributions made by the Department to the national and local economy. It has been repeatedly mentioned that Department faculty members are leaders in establishing interdisciplinary research teams and provide invaluable resources and services to stakeholders. Indeed, the comparative advantage of the Department is the ability to provide efficient and effective practical solutions to mitigate problems faced by the local agricultural community.

The faculty's skills, collaborative spirit, and stakeholders' affiliations set a strong foundation for future excellence development. The fact that the Department and undergraduate Program is new but coming from traditional departments with technical backgrounds evolving unique and potentially exciting opportunities in the agricultural sector.

Findings

The Department offers opportunities for professional development to all Faculty members and encourages scholarly activity and innovative research by encouraging students to do project work.

Analysis

The Department's focus on applied research, strong affiliations with local stakeholders, and legacy in agricultural science and technology excellence are met with an overwhelming endorsement by student applicants. Most faculty members have enough time to participate in and organize applied research programs. However, some faculty members have a notable research activity with many publications, while others have much lower. Nevertheless, the mobility of Faculty members could be better, mainly with universities and institutes abroad.

Conclusions

The Faculty's skills, collaborative spirit, and stakeholders' affiliations set a strong foundation for future excellence and development.

Panel Judgement

Principle 6: Ensuring the competence and high quality of the teaching staff of the new undergraduate study programmes	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- Encourage mobility and promote professional development activities of the Faculty to remain current in their research and the fast-changing technology, bringing back extra value to the Department
- Improve the research performance of some Faculty members (e.g., number of publications, involvement and supervising in research programs) to mitigate the imbalance in the Department

Principle 7: Learning Resources and Student Support of the New Undergraduate Programmes

Institutions should have adequate funding to meet the needs for the operation of the academic unit and the new study programme as well as the means to cover all their 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 resources, on a planned and long-term basis, to support learning and academic activity in general, in order to offer students the best possible level of studies. The above means include facilities such as, the necessary general and specific libraries and possibilities for access to electronic databases, study rooms, educational and scientific equipment, information and communication services, support and 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 students, students with disabilities), in addition to 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. Students should be informed about all available services. In delivering support services, the role of support and administration staff is crucial and therefore this segment of staff needs to be qualified and have opportunities to develop its competences.

Relevant documentation

- *Detailed description of the infrastructure and services made available by the Institution to the academic unit to support learning and academic activity (human resources, infrastructure, services, etc.) and the corresponding specific commitment of the Institution to financially cover these infrastructure-services from state or other resources*
- *Administrative support staff of the new undergraduate programme (job descriptions, qualifications and responsibilities)*
- *Informative / promotional material given to students with reference to the available services*

Study Programme Compliance

The Department has adequate facilities dedicated to supporting the study program and its students. Teaching equipment in the classrooms and laboratories is of satisfactory quality. Auxiliary facilities (i.e., EDUROAM, VPN, IT Systems and learning platforms, academic publishing houses' databases, etc.) are also available and accessible to students when needed. Students are well informed of the different support services available and confidently expressed that they have good access to them.

The Department occupies nine (9) lecture rooms with a total capacity of 700 students; all facilitated with disabled accessibility. Seven (7) are of exclusive use, whereas two (2) lecture halls are shared with other departments. Eighteen (18) standardized laboratories facilitated with disabled accessibility, sixteen (16) of them are of exclusive use of the Department to reinforce the teaching work.

The virtual tour and discussions with teaching staff and students revealed that laboratories satisfactorily cover the learning needs; however, some laboratory materials are missing due to the Department's underfunding.

The campus hosts a library and offices for the teaching staff, allowing daily communication between students and their teachers. Under the curation of the Department, the following Research Institutes are recently established, approved, and licensed via Official Government Gazettes:

- Agricultural economy, development, and entrepreneurship (Government Gazette: B 501/09.02.22)
- Floriculture and landscape architecture (Government Gazette: B 894/25.02.22)
- Applied vegetable science (Government Gazette: B 1016/04.03.22), which, among others, established one seed bank with traditional Peloponnese varieties of vegetables (Government Gazette: B 4194/19.11.19)
- Biotechnological applications (Government Gazette: B 448/07.02.22)
- Kalamata's sensory lab of olive oil (Government Gazette: B 876/25.02.22)

The Department's facilities include a farm, greenhouses, and one insect nursery. The farm, with a total area of 5 hectares, was not visited due to the late-night online tour; nevertheless, some pictures were presented by the teaching staff. According to the students, greenhouses, and the insect nursery, with a total area of 2 acres, are functional but need renovation and modernization. For this, students proposed training excursions (none has been materialized in part 3.5 years).

The Department administrative staff is housed within the campus. It appears to be sufficiently staffed, well-equipped and organized to offer support to students and staff in an efficient manner.

The Department and the University institutionally provide counselling/advocating/ complaint and objection management services to students, whether freshers or in an advanced year of study. Teachers adopted the "open-door" approach to supporting the students. In line with the interviewed students, they expressed their satisfaction with the efficiency of the Secretariat and the support and counselling services in robust terms, especially during the two years of the pandemic. The sports facilities (basketball, football, and tennis courts) need urgent renovation as the students do not use them due to the required repairs and renovations.

Findings

The Department occupies in total 27 lecture rooms and laboratories, farm, greenhouses, one insect nursery, secretariat and teaching staff offices, library, technological auxiliary facilities, dormitories and sports areas.

Analysis

The abovementioned infrastructure was well presented during the virtual tour as well as via the presentation files.

Conclusions

The Department has adequate facilities dedicated to supporting the study program and its students. Teaching equipment in the classrooms and laboratories is of satisfactory quality, but some rooms/laboratories and greenhouses need renovation/modernization.

Panel Judgement

Principle 7: Learning resources and student support of the new undergraduate programmes	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- Work closely with the University authorities to maintain the generous levels of infrastructure available and ensure the continuous maintenance of the facilities
- Consider the enhancement of extracurricular activities wherever possible
- Improve the structure and user-friendliness of the Department's website, allowing students to be informed about all available services and regulations. Translation in the English language needs enrichment and improvement
- Update sports facilities to allow students to practice team and individual sports at no cost

Principle 8: Collection, Analysis and Use of Information for the Organisation and Operation of New Undergraduate Programmes

The Institutions and their academic units 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.

Effective procedures for collecting and analysing information on the operation of Institutions, academic units and study programmes feed data into the internal quality assurance system. The following data is of interest: key performance indicators for the student body profile, student progression, success and drop-out rates, student satisfaction with the programme, availability of learning resources and student support. The completion of the fields of National Information System for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (NISQA) should be correct and complete with the exception of the fields that concern graduates in which a null value is registered.

Relevant documentation

- *Report from the National Information System for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (NISQA) at the level of the Institution, the department and the new UGP*
- *Operation of an information management system for the collection of administrative data for the implementation of the programme (Students' Record)*
- *Other tools and procedures designed to collect data on the academic and administrative functions of the academic unit and the study programme*

Study Programme Compliance

The departmental statistics reside on information management systems involved in the gathering, analysing, and utilizing data and information relative to the Undergraduate Program of Study, including:

- The University wide-based MODIP system
- The Departmental information management system
- The ERASMUS program management system
- The Career Office management system
- The Comprehensive National Quality Control Information System (ΟΠΕΣΠ) of ΕΤΗΑΑΕ

This information network is utilized to serve the academic and administrative needs of the Department as well as to be used for Program Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement, for which the Departmental Unit for Quality Assurance (OMEA) and the University Unit for Quality Assurance (MODIP) are responsible. OMEA, the internal evaluation group, analyses the student data and uses this information to improve the performance of students and all teaching personnel. OMEA gathers and inputs data and information in the departmental information system on an ongoing basis about a variety of categories relevant to the Program of Study, such as:

- The instructional and research activities of the faculty members
- The departmental teaching support facilities
- The administrative staff support
- Data on course evaluations by the students

- Student profiles
- Student academic progress
- Based on personal discussions with Faculty and the President of the Department, and information from stakeholders

Easy access to the departmental system is provided to the faculty, students, and staff, all of whom are involved in the submission of data, which eventually is quantified in the form of KPIs that can be easily interpreted and used for measurement and assessment purposes.

Students are presented with the opportunity to evaluate the faculty and support personnel via anonymous surveys. Still, the EEAP found that student participation in course evaluations is low, approximately 10% of registered students.

Employability and career paths of graduates are unavailable because no graduates exist from the current New Undergraduate Study Program of the AUOP.

Findings

The departmental statistics reside on information management systems involved in the gathering, analysing, and utilizing data and information relative to the Department.

Analysis

The information network utilized by the Department for Program Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement, serves the academic and administrative needs of the Departmental Unit for Quality Assurance (OMEA) and the University Unit for Quality Assurance (MODIP).

Conclusions

The collection, analysis and use of information is fully served by the information network of the Department aimed at efficient management.

Panel Judgement

Principle 8: Collection, analysis and use of information for the organisation and operation of new undergraduate programmes	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- Encourage students to complete surveys for all semester classes, potentially linking the participation with a grade bonus
- Develop methodology and procedures to collect employment data and provide information on career paths and employability of graduates

Principle 9: Public Information Concerning the New Undergraduate Programmes

Institutions and academic units should publish information about their teaching and academic activities in a direct and readily accessible way. The relevant information should be up-to-date, clear and objective.

Information on the Institutions' activities is useful for prospective and current students, graduates, other stakeholders and the public. Therefore, Institutions and their academic units must provide information about their activities, including the new undergraduate programmes they offer, the intended learning outcomes, the degrees awarded, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, the pass rates and the learning opportunities available to their students. Information is also provided, to the extent possible, on graduate employment perspectives.

Relevant documentation

- *Dedicated segment on the website of the department for the promotion of the new study programme*
- *Bilingual version of the website of the academic unit with complete, clear and objective information*
- *Provision for website maintenance and updating*

Study Programme Compliance

The academic and educational content of the Department, as well as information about activities in conjunction with daily announcements, are available to the Public in digital form through the departmental and University websites. The University website (<https://www.uop.gr>) acts complementary to the information available on the departmental website (<https://agro.uop.gr>) as they may apply to the Department. The DAUOP's website includes and displays comprehensive information about all valuable aspects related to the Program of Study, including:

- The profile of the Department
- The human services of the Department
- The student guides
- The Program of Study description, including course descriptions and syllabi
- The administrative services of the Department
- The student services of the Department and the ones in association with the University
- Information on the Practical Training
- Information on the academic research
- Academic community access to the e-class module
- A dedicated sector for the new students
- Faculty biographical sketches and research activities, and publications

The information concerning the quality assurance of the Department may be found on the website of MODIP of the University at: <https://modip.uop.gr/index.php/diasfalisi-poiotitas/dedomena-poiotitas> including:

- The report of the External Evaluation of the University
- The annual Internal Evaluation report
- The QA policy of the Department and Information on MODIP and OMEA activity,

Information on student services (i.e., library, internships, career office, Department and University collaboration with other bodies and authorities, electronic platform services) is found on the University's website.

Nonetheless, some helpful information is missing (i.e., information on the student advisor and student mentor role, accessibility issues from nearby destinations)

On the UoP website, one can easily find extensive and updated information on teaching research administration, recent news, and upcoming events relating to the Institution and its stakeholders. It may be noted that while the information found on Greek web pages is extensive enough to cover most queries a student may have, that in English is far more restricted, focusing almost exclusively on academic studies and the teaching function of the Institution. Thus, the website in English has been developed with only a few questions prospective international students are likely to have in mind (i.e., sequence and contents of individual courses, assessment methods, bibliography, timetables, faculty credentials, and research work, and other details of interest to students). In contrast, the Greek version targets a far wider audience.

A noticeable discrepancy exists by looking at the websites of the UoP website and the several schools and institutes that have now become part of the Institution. That is, while it is practically very little that might be considered missing on the website of the former, the websites of the latter, that is, some schools and institutes located outside Tripoli, are characterized by scarcity of information notifying the viewer that information will be available shortly.

Findings

The academic and educational content of the Department, as well as information about activities in conjunction with daily announcements, are made available to the Public in digital form through the departmental and University websites.

Analysis

Public information is comprised in three distinct websites (Department, University of Peloponnese and MODIP). This articulation is confusing. In addition, some critical information

is missing (i.e., Department’s attractiveness, students’ advisors, accessibility information from nearby cities). English version of the Department’s website needs enrichment.

Conclusions

Prospective students in the case of searching information of the programs of study offered, and, also, University stakeholders interested in the quality research, and other achievements of the faculty, would not serve their interests and needs. A well-structured website with a marketing asset orientation is needed.

Panel Judgement

Principle 9: Public information concerning the new undergraduate programmes	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	X
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- Update the website to deliver relevant information with environmental, social, and economic responsibility contributions, addressing local stakeholders and the general public
- Produce and release videos and other promotional material(s) could be produced under the theme “Why should I study in the DoA of UoP?”
- Improve the English version of the website and assure its full compatibility with the Greek version

Principle 10: Periodic Internal Review of the New Study Programmes

Institutions and academic units should have in place an internal quality assurance system, for the audit and annual internal review of their new 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 the new study programmes aim at maintaining the level of educational provision and creating 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.

Relevant documentation

- *Procedure for the re-evaluation, redefinition and updating of the curriculum*
- *Procedure for mitigating weaknesses and upgrading the structure of the UGP and the learning process*
- *Feedback processes on strategy implementation and quality targeting of the new UGP and relevant decision-making processes (students, external stakeholders)*
- *Results of the annual internal evaluation of the study programme by the QAU and the relevant minutes*

Study Programme Compliance

The Undergraduate Program on Agriculture (Integrated Master) of the UoP is reviewed regularly by a five-member Internal Evaluation Committee. Additionally, all students are requested to evaluate the attended theoretical and lab courses using a physical or electronic questionnaire circulated after the 8th week of classes. The content and format of the questionnaire are based on a template established by the Quality Assurance Unit of the University. Each questionnaire includes 21 course-related questions, seven instructor-related, and five student-related questions. The student uses a 5-point Likert scale (1: Poor; 2: Below average; 3: Average; 4: Above average; and 5: Excellent) that allows comparisons of students' opinions through time.

Based on discussions, student participation in the evaluation process is approximately 10% each semester, which is considered extremely low. During the meeting of the EEAP with the students, the latter did not express any concerns about anonymity or confidentiality and could not justify the low participation rates. Therefore, the Internal Evaluation Committee needs to better inform the students about the evaluation process, address any concerns, and strongly encourage participation.

Findings

The program is reviewed internally by a five-member committee, and the students are provided with a questionnaire to evaluate each attended course.

Analysis

The Department needs to address the problem of low participation of students to the evaluation process.

Conclusions

It is highly suggested that the Department addresses students' low participation in course evaluations and utilizes the produced data to identify solutions to existing problems.

Panel Judgement

Principle 10: Periodic internal review of the new study programmes	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	X
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- Develop strategies that will increase course evaluation participation (i.e., demonstrate the value of evaluation, allow time to complete questionnaires during class, or organize special sessions)
- Add open-ended questions to allow students to elaborate on essential aspects or express concerns not addressed elsewhere
- Perform multivariate statistical analysis of all information embedded in the questionnaires to identify associations among the students, the Faculty, and the Program
- Post course evaluation results on the Department's website and reveal related actions for improvement

Principle 11: Regular External Evaluation and Accreditation of the New Undergraduate Programmes

The new undergraduate study programmes should regularly undergo evaluation by panels of external experts set by HAHE, aiming at accreditation. The results of the external evaluation and accreditation are used for the continuous improvement of the Institutions, academic units and study programmes. 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 panel of independent experts. HAHE grants accreditation of programmes, based on the Reports submitted by the panels, 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 Standards, and as a catalyst for improvement, while opening new perspectives towards the international standing of the awarded degrees. Both academic units and institutions must consistently consider the conclusions and the recommendations submitted by the panels of experts for the continuous improvement of the programme.

Relevant documentation

- *Progress report on the results from the utilisation of the recommendations of the external evaluation of the Institution and of the IQAS Accreditation Report.*

Study Programme Compliance

Principle 11 cannot be properly and thoroughly evaluated because the Department is a newly established one based on the new transition law of the former TEI structure, and the Department has never had any other external evaluation before.

The HAHE, with an Information Notice (18.11.22), asked the EEAP to consider, apart from the rest of the revised documentation submitted from the Department, the fact that the Department responded partially to HAHE's recommendations as far as principle 1 is concerned.

The last external evaluation of the UoP (not the Department) was carried out in April 2016 by a five-member team of external evaluators under the coordination of ADIP (now HAHE). The UoP was evaluated regarding its overall operation, strategy, goals, structures, procedures, and regulations of its central information systems and services. The observations focused on the institution's strategic planning, the strengthening of the administrative staff, the design of the websites and public information, and the percentages of student participation in the evaluation of courses/teachers.

In this context, the MODIP has produced a detailed and precise report including all the significant advantages and issues regarding the progress of the transition and its degree of completion of the pre-existing curriculum.

Findings

The Regulation of Studies, based on the former (TEI Peloponnese), has been renewed and complemented but needs to be amended shortly after applying the recommendations and updates proposed by the current evaluation report.

Analysis

The regular Internal Review of the program is vital for newly founded university programs. The success of that program depends on the inclusion of all the representative stakeholders (academic area, students, social partners, public sector, primary sector, retail, industry, etc.).

Conclusions

The internal review reports currently acknowledge this need and must be continued in the same manner.

Panel Judgement

Principle 11: Regular external evaluation and accreditation of the new undergraduate programmes	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

We acknowledge that the Department has no responsibility for the lack of previous external evaluation. Therefore, the EEAP voted “fully compliant” for the evaluation and not accreditation.

Principle 12: Monitoring the Transition from Previous Undergraduate Study Programmes to the New Ones

Institutions and academic units apply procedures for the transition from previously existing undergraduate study programmes to new ones, in order to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Standards.

Applies in cases where the department implements, in addition to the new UGPs, any pre-existing UGPs from departments of former Technological Educational Institutions (TEI) or from departments that were merged / renamed / abolished.

Institutions should implement procedures for the transition from former UGPs to new ones, in order to ensure their compliance with the requirements of the Standards. More specifically, the institution and the academic unit must have a) the necessary learning resources, b) appropriate teaching staff, c) structured curriculum (courses, ECTS, learning outcomes), d) study regulations, award of diploma and diploma supplement, and e) system of data collection and use, with particular reference to the data of the graduates of the pre-existing UGP. In this context, the Institutions and the academic units prepare a plan for the foreseen transition period of the existing UGP until its completion, the costs caused to the Institution by its operation as well as possible measures and proposals for its smooth delivery and termination. This planning includes data on the transition and subsequent progression of students in the respective new UGP of the academic unit, as well as the specific graduation forecast for students enrolled under the previous status.

Relevant documentation

- *The planning of the Institution for the foreseen transition period, the operating costs and the specific measures or proposals for the smooth implementation and completion of the programme*
- *The study regulations, template for the degree and the diploma supplement*
- *Name list of teaching staff, status, subject and the course they teach / examine*
- *Report of Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) on the progress of the transition and the degree of completion of the programme. In the case of UGP of a former Technological Educational Institution (TEI), the report must include a specific reference to how the internship was implemented*

Study Programme Compliance

The Undergraduate Program on Agriculture (Integrated Master) of the UoP was founded in 2019. It is one of the 11 Agriculture Departments in the country, but unique for the Prefecture of Messenia. The program has a newly developed curriculum and a four-year strategic plan with specific goals.

The Department is housed in a central building with four teaching classrooms, 18 teaching and research labs, a library, and several offices for Faculty and staff. Research and teaching activity also occurs in an approximately 5-hectare farm/orchard space, ten greenhouses, and an insect nursery.

The teaching and academic research staff (DEP) includes 22 permanent members, a number that could be potentially increased under certain conditions. The EEAP considers that all

members have the required education and skills to meet the teaching and research requirements. The program is supported by the regular budget for Greek Universities, the National Development and Investment Program, National Strategic Reference Frameworks, and several research grants.

The Department supports newly incoming students, as well as those of the former Technological University DoA Technology, to obtain a university-level degree with an integrated master (Level 7 of the National and European Qualifications Framework). The granted degree aligns with the skills and qualifications described in PD 344/2000.

Findings

The undergraduate program has a newly developed curriculum, unique to the Prefecture of Messenia.

Analysis

All teaching and research staff are adequately skilled to support the program and meet teaching and research requirements.

Conclusions

All students will be granted a university-level degree with an integrated master which aligns with the skills and qualifications described in PD 344/2000.

Panel Judgement

Principle 12: Monitoring the transition from previous undergraduate study programmes to the new ones	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- Promote a more open and competitive structure in research and teaching
- Collect and analyse information on student participation and course evaluation
- Develop strategies for decreasing the faculty: student ratio

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

- Students' participation in research is widely recognized
- The Faculty is accessible and available for personal communication with their students
- The Department's focus on applied research, strong affiliations with local stakeholders, and legacy in agricultural science and technology excellence are met with an overwhelming endorsement by student applicants
- Most faculty members dedicate time to participate in and organize applied research programs
- The comparative advantage of the Department is the ability to provide efficient and effective practical solutions to mitigate problems faced by the local agricultural community

II. Areas of Weakness

- In the Students' Guide, include a section, after the presentation of the academic staff, with areas of research of the personnel
- There are no instructions in the Students' Guide about the Role and Importance of the Academic Advisor, as well as the psychological support provided if needed
- Student engagement and attendance should be improved using alternative lecture formats such as mandatory connection with laboratory lessons, student presentations, and group discussions
- Mobility at the faculty level is limited
- Students do not complete surveys for all semester classes

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- Set qualitative and quantitative goals per the strategic plan based on the key elements that are well-described, concise, and understandable
- Until the new University website is operational, try to improve the existing one by adding all the missing information and building up the English version
- Include the Students' Guide quantitative comparisons to similar curricula in renowned global programs to meet self-imposed requirements for excellence and enhance its reputation
- Implement strategies to increase student participation in course evaluations. A potential student premium could improve the participation rate
- Organize orientation seminars for incoming and transfer students

- Enhance student engagement and participation in local, national, and international professional development activities (i.e., seminars/webinars, stakeholder events, ERASMUS+ network program)
- Work closely with the University authorities to upgrade the existing infrastructure and ensure the continuous maintenance of the facilities by attracting external funds
- Consider the enhancement of extracurricular activities wherever possible
- Synergy among the Faculty members is strongly recommended
- Develop methodology and procedures to collect employment data and provide information on career paths and employability of the newly developed undergraduate program

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: **1, 2, 3, 4, 8, 11, and 12.**

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **5, 6, and 7.**

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are: **9 and 10.**

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

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

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname

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