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HELLENIC REPUBLIC
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HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE
AND ACCREDITATION AGENCY

Accreditation Report
for the Undergraduate Study Programme of:

Political Science and International Relations

Institution: University of Peloponnese
Date: March 9, 2019

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Report of the Panel appointed by the HQA to undertake the review of the Undergraduate Study Programme of **Political Science and International Relations** of the **University of Peloponnese** for the purposes of granting accreditation

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PART A: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW

I.   The Accreditation Panel

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the Undergraduate Study Programme of the Higher Education Institution named: Political Science and International Relations comprised the following three (3) members, drawn from the HQA Register, in accordance with the Law 4009/2011:

1. **Professor Symeon Giannakos (Chair),**
   Salve Regina University, U.S.A.

2. **Professor Petros Vamvakas,**
   Emmanuel College, U.S.A.

3. **Professor Nikolaos Zahariadis,**
   Rhodes College, U.S.A.

II.   Review Procedure and Documentation

The Accreditation Panel (AP) visited the Political Science and International Relations Department of the University of Peloponnese in Corinth from the 4th to the 5th of March 2019. This meeting came following a briefing/orientation meeting with the President of the Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency (HQA) and its administration. Once in the Department, the AP was welcomed by the Rector, and met with the Vice-Rector/President of the Institutional Unit of Quality Assurance (MODIP), the MODIP Committee, the Internal Assessment Committee (OMEA), members of the teaching faculty, current Department students, members of the Department's alumni, and internship agencies/external stakeholders. The AP also visited the Registrar's Office, the Library, the Computer Lab, classrooms and faculty offices. This report is based on information made available by the Department directly to the AP or through ADIP. Such documentation included the Department's accreditation proposal with supportive documentation, the Department's Verification Report, along with specific information requested by the AP. The accreditation visit took place in a professional and cooperative environment. All parties involved conducted themselves admirably well and the process was smooth, effective and efficient. The information provided to the AP was clear, concise and comprehensive.

III.   Study Programme Profile

The Political Science and International Relations Department of the University of Peloponnese has been operating since the academic year 2007-2008 when it first admitted students. In 2010, the Department received academic and administrative independence. The Department underwent internal evaluations in 2011 and 2013 and an external evaluation in the spring of 2014. It incorporated the external panel's recommendations into its workings and has adjusted itself accordingly in achieving continuous progress. The teaching faculty of the Department has grown from 6 in the 2007-2008 period to its current 17 members, the clear majority of whom is engaged in research and publishing.

The undergraduate curriculum of the Department offers a bachelor's degree with concentration options in Political Science or International Relations. The curriculum is organized along two layers of course offerings: a series of core and elective courses that are required of all undergraduate students, followed by a second set of core and elective courses for each of the program's two concentrations. The Department also requires two English language courses, which emphasize terminology.

Degree completion requires completion of 48 courses or six courses per each of one of eight semesters at 5 ECTS per course for a total of 240 ECTS.   Out of the 48 total number of courses, 24 are core (specific courses for all students), 12 are core courses specific to the selected concentration, and 12 are electives. Students are required to complete the core requirements in the first four semesters of their study, chose a concentration and follow their studies for the last four semesters by enrolling in three concentration core courses and three electives per semester. Undergraduate students also have the option of completing an undergraduate thesis in place of two elective courses within their concentration. Internship opportunities are available and an internship takes the place of an elective course.

Department graduates have secured places for post-graduate studies in a number of graduate schools, a significant number gained employment in the private sector, while a smaller number has been placed in the public sector. In a recent survey (February 2019), 60 percent of the sampled graduates said they found a job within six months.

The Department currently (2018-19) has 414 undergraduate students and was allocated a total number of 128 first-year students in the 2018-19 academic year. Graduation rates within five years for the 2017-18 academic year (last available) stand at 58.18 percent.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

Principle 1: Academic Unit Policy for Quality Assurance

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

> *The quality assurance policy of the academic unit is in line with the Institutional policy on quality, and is included in a published statement that is implemented by all stakeholders. It focuses on the achievement of special objectives related to the quality assurance of study programmes offered by the academic unit.*
>
> *The quality policy statement of the academic unit includes its commitment to implement a quality policy that will promote the academic profile and orientation of the programme, its purpose and field of study; it will realise the programme's strategic goals and it will determine the means and ways for attaining them; it will implement the appropriate quality procedures, aiming at the programme's continuous improvement.*
>
> *In particular, in order to carry out this policy, the academic unit commits itself to put into practice quality procedures that will demonstrate:*
>
> a) *the suitability of the structure and organization of the curriculum;*
> b) *the pursuit of learning outcomes and qualifications in accordance with the European and the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education;*
> c) *the promotion of the quality and effectiveness of teaching;*
> d) *the appropriateness of the qualifications of the teaching staff;*
> e) *the enhancement of the quality and quantity of the research output among faculty members of the academic unit;*
> f) *ways for linking teaching and research;*
> g) *the level of demand for qualifications acquired by graduates, in the labour market;*
> h) *the quality of support services such as the administrative services, the Library, and the student welfare office;*
> i) *the conduct of an annual review and an internal audit of the quality assurance system of the undergraduate programme(s) offered, as well as the collaboration of the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG) with the Institution's Quality Assurance Unit (QAU);*

Study Programme compliance

The Department has an established structure of Quality Assurance as prescribed by HQA. It also has OMEA and a Committee of Undergraduate Studies (CUS). Both work at the department level under the umbrella and within the framework of MODIP.

Since its inception in 2007, the Department has a stated mission: "The promotion of the study and research in the areas of European relations, diplomacy, international cooperation and the relations of Greece with the Greek diaspora, emphasizing its involvement in the economic, political, cultural level in the Balkan, European, and international environment."

The Department has an ambitious mission, which, at face value, appears to be met despite obstacles related to it being relatively new. Overall, the Department has heeded and acted on the recommendations of their first external review of 2014. It has created internal structures as outlined by HQA, so as to create the mechanisms of fostering quality assurance. Beyond establishment of the structure, there is acceptance among the constituent parts of the Department as to the importance of the quality assurance process. There is a strong commitment in aligning learning outcomes at the department level, but also alignment with national and European standards. Beyond the above-mentioned mechanisms of OMEA and CUS, there is a Committee of Research Planning (CRP). The outlined aims and responsibilities of CRP are: to encourage and supervise the participation of students in research projects; to provide data to OMEA; and, to provide an end-of-year report to OMEA. The Department has the impressive output of one to two peer-reviewed articles per academic year and one book per 3-4 academic years per faculty member. This is an important measure of meeting the quality assurance goals of the Department. There is a deliberate process by the faculty members to link their research with the students' learning outcomes by informing their in-classroom teaching and by encouraging student research.

There is also a Committee of Internships (CI), which aims: to make connections with agencies and organizations that provide internship placement; to review the applications for internships; to align the supervising faculty and the student; to supervise the overall process. It meets three times during the academic year or as necessary and reports to the faculty department meeting.

The mission statement of OMEA is: to outline and enforce the process of internal review and assessment; to communicate to faculty and students the outcomes of the assessments; to coordinate the curriculum with other internal committees; and to collaborate with student government and the alumni organization. OMEA achieves the above aims by: monitoring incoming and transfer students; coordinating undergraduate course offerings, reviewing and posting course syllabi; monitoring graduation rates; and monitoring student course evaluations. The OMEA report contains quantitative and qualitative data that go back to the 2015-16 academic year on a range of indices assessing the overall program of studies. In addition, OMEA keeps data of student course evaluations for all courses taught over the last two years. Ultimately, these are provided to the faculty to review content, delivery and learning outcomes.

The Department is in **full compliance** with the letter and spirit of the assessment and accreditation process. There is an accreditation structure, which includes all constituencies, and a functioning pyramid of assessment. Although this internal assessment is a newly established process, the structure does provide the necessary framework that assures a sustainable quality assurance process.

Panel judgement

Principle 1: Institution policy for Quality Assurance	
Fully compliant	**X**
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

The Department should look to establish a more formalized curriculum committee, which reflects and stays within the mission of the department and the learning goals.

Principle 2: Design and Approval of Programmes

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

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

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

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

Study Programme compliance

The Department has restructured its offerings and opportunities following the external review of 2014. There is a greater number of electives with an interdisciplinary focus, especially within International Relations. For a newly established department there is great pressure to build up its course offerings and at the same time to stay within the framework of its mission statement. The expansion of electives in areas that were not previously covered, although an easy task, is bound to create challenges in the future. The increase in the number of faculty has allowed the Department to offer a greater number of electives in areas and themes that reflect the changing landscape, the demands of the labor market, and student interests. The Department has done a very nice job in recruiting the faculty needed to expand and provide such a wide variety of electives.

There seems to be a strong sense of community and collaboration that permeates throughout the Department and has helped in establishing informal and formal structures. There is a requisite buy-in among all stakeholders that the institutionalization of the process, design, and approval of programs is within the framework of the Department's strategic goals. CUS in coordination with OMEA and MODIP works as an extension of the annual department meetings. There is a process which starts in March of every year that aims to identify program and/or course ajustments. The process is formalized and outlined within the functions of CUS and

reflects suggestions and/or recommendations by faculty and/or students. The process ends in May prior to the announcement of the course schedule for the next academic year.

There is evidence that the Department has moved toward enhancing the curriculum beyond in-class offerings by promoting paid internships, participation in study abroad through Erasmus placement, as well as simulation and more interactive activities in and out of the classroom.

Although the Department has made tremendous strides in diversifying its offerings and student opportunities, it has to be more deliberate in clearly publicizing them. The Department is in **full compliance** with this principle.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

CUS should outline timetables and specific parameters as to what and when is necessary to be submitted for review.

Principle 3: Student- centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment

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

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

The student-centred learning and teaching process

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

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

Study Programme compliance

The Department uses formal and informal mechanisms to promote a greater engagement with the students. There is an obvious disadvantage as to the Department's facilities, which are lacking. In a counterintuitive way this disadvantage works as social bond among the students and faculty. There is a great deal of respect, camaraderie, and collegiality among the faculty and among the faculty and students. The student-focused learning is not only reflected in the course selection or pedagogical approaches, but also in the course mapping throughout the semester. The Department makes certain that courses are offered in a cycle and frequency that accommodates the needs of a student body, 70% of which commutes from Athens. The semester schedule of courses is designed in a way that students can attend all of their courses

in a three-day block to reduce travel time. There are also careful allocations of required courses and electives for each level and each focus area, so that all students have viable options within a semester.

According to the data provided by OMEA and to anecdotal evidence garnered during interviews with students, faculty and staff, the students and their needs are at the forefront of the academic mission of the Department. The students have a clear strong voice and have mechanisms of shared governance as well as participatory voice in the curricular offerings. This is especially evident by the student course evaluations and by the level of participation in classes. The student course evaluations are reviewed not only by the individual faculty, but are also reviewed and assessed within the end of the year curricular review. The recommendations are then forwarded to the Department meeting and contribute to possible curricular changes. The Department has acted upon the recommendations made in the 2014 assessment, by adjusting its pedagogical approaches to increase student involvement and class participation. Some of the changes include: course offerings that have prerequisite requirements; a greater number of seminars; and multiple ways of student assessment, which include research papers, midterm examinations, and simulations.

There is a deliberate effort to balance academic mission and student satisfaction, without rendering the student as a customer. The Department is in **full compliance** of the Principle of student-focused learning.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Continue with the good relations of mutuality and respect that exists in the Department. AP recommends continuing to develop extracurricular activities such as the creation of a Model United Nations and debate clubs.

Principle 4: Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification

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

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

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

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

Study Programme compliance

The Department has initiated, institutionalized, and has been implementing a coherent and consistent admissions, orientation and academic progress process, supported by an electronic database system operated out of the Registrar's office in the Secretariat.

The process begins with the student orientation and advising week in the beginning of each academic year. The orientation process includes introducing first-year students to the administrative staff of the Registrar's office, familiarizing them with the registration process, the program of study, the Computer Lab and the Library. First-year students also have the opportunity to meet and interact with upperclassmen to exchange views, information and experiences.

Following orientation, students are assigned to an academic advisor and student progress is monitored electronically. Students are encouraged to communicate with their academic advisor and communication is done primarily through electronic correspondence and face-to-face conferencing.

Student feedback demonstrated a general satisfaction with the orientation and advising process. Students confirmed they receive timely response from the faculty on the inquiries through electronic correspondence. The faculty are mindful of student needs and generally are readily accessible by the students. The AP observed a general satisfaction by the students. The initiation and implementation of the electronic database system for registration and progress monitoring of the students has been a pioneer process in the Greek academic world. The Department is genuinely proud of its accomplishment in this regard. The entire process is working efficiently and effectively and the administrative staff are performing an admirable job, which, more often than not, calls them to function beyond conventional requirements expected of their jobs.

The cornerstone of student mobility opportunities is the Erasmus Program. The process is facilitated by the establishment of the Erasmus Committee, which also includes student

representation. This Committee is responsible for initiating bilateral agreements with possible guest institutions, advising students and maintaining the Department's website regarding the Erasmus program. The Committee has concluded 25 bilateral agreements and has established concise requirements for student participation in this program. To encourage students to participate in the program, the Department offers to cover student travel expenses to a maximum of 400 Euros. The number of students participating in the program remains low. A mere four students did so for the academic year 2018-2019.

While the Department does encourage student mobility, the number of students taking advantage of the opportunity is low.

The Department provides another opportunity for student mobility by the internship program. Again, the Department covers student travel expenses up to 400 Euros. The process is facilitated by the Internship Committee, which oversees the entire process. This is a far more used opportunity than Erasmus. As many as 47 students participated during the 2017-2018 academic year and 39 students are enrolled in the current academic year. As many as 40 agencies participate in the process as potential hosts.

AP met with a number of representatives of the host agencies and they seemed genuinely satisfied and content with the quality and commitment of the participating students. AP recommends institutionalizing the participation of external agencies so that there is a greater flow of information regarding the placement of students for the best possible fit. Overall, the process of student mobility meets high standards. To improve the process further, the Department can establish a career service office to inform students of market trends and opportunities.

The European Course Transfer System (ECTS) is used across the curriculum. The same applies to the diploma supplement process.

The Department is in **full compliance** with the fourth principle.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The Department should continue to deepen relations with external agencies for the placement of students for internships and to institutionalize a career services office.

The Department should make a greater effort to increase the number of students participating in the Erasmus Program. A survey can be conducted to find out why the students are reluctant to participate.

The number of students participating in the internship program is high, but there is also a great number of students who do not participate. It is not clear why that is so, and this needs to be addressed.

Principle 5: Teaching Staff

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

The Institutions and their academic units have a major responsibility as to the standard of their teaching staff providing them with a supportive environment that promotes the advancement of their scientific work. In particular, the academic unit should:

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

Study Programme compliance

In the selection and development of faculty, the Department follows the legal framework established by the Greek state. Teaching and professional development are the two primary departmental concerns. Although the resources allocated to each faculty member for development are modest, the Department encourages and often facilitates professional development initiatives. Beyond the basic funding available, additional resources are secured through research grants and graduate tuition. The Department encourages the inclusion of undergraduate students in research.

The majority of the faculty maintain a publishable research agenda and they give priority to international publication venues. The Department estimates that the average number of publications is between one and two articles per year and a book every three to four years. At the undergraduate level, the teaching load is set at six hours per week. More teaching responsibilities may be added at the graduate level or other departmental activities.

Every year the Department organizes a seminar focusing on grant writing and a yearly workshop on research methodology. The Department has established a committee to promote research. It also conducts surveys to estimate the future research interests and plans of the faculty. Finally, the Department has institutionalized the practice of inviting research residents to stimulate ideas and generate new research interests.

In general terms, members of the Department's faculty secure the allocation of an impressive amount of grants ranging from a few thousand to more than 1.5 million Euros. Faculty members have established research projects and research teams, examples of which include:

- Center of International and European Political Economy and Governance
- Center for Policy Analysis
- Jean Monnet Center of Excellence
- Center for Mediterranean, Middle Eastern, and Islamic Studies
- Southeast European Research Unit.

Finally, the Department organizes annual symposia and conferences and cooperates with faculty from other Departments. The faculty in general demonstrate a wide range of subject expertise and also a considerable depth in many subject areas.

The Department retains a high level of research activity and although its relevance to teaching cannot be documented, the Accreditation Panel feels that research inevitably translates into improving the quality of teaching.

In terms of evaluating teaching by students, the Department has institutionalized course evaluations. Although the number of students completing them is relatively low, the students have the opportunity to provide feedback anonymously. Student testimonies support the fact that the Department responds to their concerns. The process by which student evaluations are analyzed and utilized has been refined at the institutional level.

AP is overall impressed with the research agenda and activities of the Department: **Full Compliance.**

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

While the Department is making progress in creating faculty diversity, the effort needs to be intensified.

Principle 6: Learning Resources and Student Support

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

> *Institutions and their academic units must have sufficient funding and means to support learning and academic activity in general, so that they can offer to students the best possible level of studies. The above means could include facilities such as libraries, study rooms, educational and scientific equipment, information and communications services, support or counselling services.*
>
> *When allocating the available resources, the needs of all students must be taken into consideration (e.g. whether they are full-time or part-time students, employed or international students, students with disabilities) and the shift towards student-centred learning and the adoption of flexible modes of learning and teaching. Support activities and facilities may be organised in various ways, depending on the institutional context. However, the internal quality assurance ensures that all resources are appropriate, adequate, and accessible, and that students are informed about the services available to them.*
>
> *In delivering support services the role of support and administrative staff is crucial and therefore they need to be qualified and have opportunities to develop their competences.*

Study Programme compliance

The Department was recently relocated to a larger area, which gave it more space for classrooms, computer lab, library and faculty offices. The Department is pleased with the noticeable space improvement.

As noticeable as the improvement has been, the new arrangements remain problematic. The Department is in desperate need of a permanent location, which would contribute to reinforcing its identity and sense of community. Having an academic department of learning above a supermarket and a medical service is not an ideal environment. In this regard, every effort must be made to locate a suitable single building to house the Department permanently.

A permanent home for the Department should have space to provide student services currently missing. Such services may include an institutionalized career services office, a counseling office, and a student welfare and entertainment center along with a modest sport facility. Having students wait around in the limited hallway smoking is neither healthy nor appealing. Since the majority of students commute from Athens, provisions should be made for temporary sleeping arrangement to allow students to stay overnight when necessary.

The existing services are easily accessible by the students, and the students are adequately informed about them. The Library is well equipped and completely covers students' academic needs. It functions well using an up-to-date system of cataloguing and lending. Library holdings, including books and journal articles, are updated and accessible by the students. The library staff

are well skilled and facilitate library services expected in any modern learning academic environment.

The Registrar's office performs an admirable job facilitating a smooth academic process. As mentioned above, the staff performs way above and beyond expectations. Student testimonies referred convincingly to this reality and students seem genuinely appreciative of the staff's efforts and diligence.

The AP feels that the Department does an admirably good job with the services it provides. However, it does not provide a number of necessary services at all. The Panel's judgement, therefore, is **partially compliant**.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The absence of permanent facilities for the Department is a glaring issue.

Students need a cafeteria, a sports facility, an overnight dormitory, and a place to relax while in Corinth. The absence of facilities makes it difficult for students to enroll unless they come from Athens.

Principle 7: Information Management

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

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

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

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

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

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

Study Programme compliance

The Department has established procedures for the electronic collection of data in relation to teaching methods and evaluation of courses on a semester basis. The questionnaires are presented online in an electronic platform, which may be accessed by a student password. Students complete the questionnaires, which are recorded by the Department's secretariat. Although the rate of student responses is low, which is true with all electronic voluntary evaluations, AP notes response rates are on the rise. In due time, results are compiled and transmitted to the general department meeting and are published online in condensed form on MODIP's website. The results are presented in aggregate and anonymous format for discussion and evaluation at Departmental meetings. Lessons are drawn and a plan is drafted, but AP was not able to ascertain whether there is a specific procedure followed. When drafting the following year's curricular schedule and despite the existence of CUS, it is the entire Department that first drafts the action plan and then empowers CUS to take the results into account. The action plan involves distribution of results to students and alumni for their feedback. The Department is responsive to student input and both faculty and students seemed satisfied with the process.

Based on information received by AP, data are presented in easy-to-read graphs. They are in appropriate form including trend lines for ease of interpretation.

The AP did not receive any information regarding staff satisfaction surveys.

The Department analyzes and evaluates data regarding the availability and accessibility of resources although this does not appear to be systematic. For example, IT facilities are adequate, but the AP was not informed of a specific process to invite feedback on IT facilities other than the course evaluation process. The absence of specific complaints on IT facilities may serve as the benchmark for student satisfaction with IT.

AP's judgement for this principle is **substantial compliance.**

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The Department should empower CUS to first analyze the data and draft an action plan, which will then be brought to the entire Department for approval. CUS has more specialized knowledge and is therefore in better position to analyze the data and draft an action plan, which should then seek the Department's approval.

Develop questionnaires specifically designed to assess satisfaction with support services.

Develop questionnaires specifically designed to assess staff satisfaction.

Principle 8: Public Information

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

> *Information on Institution's activities is useful for prospective and current students, graduates, other stakeholders and the public.*
>
> *Therefore, institutions and their academic units provide information about their activities, including the programmes they offer, the intended learning outcomes, the qualifications awarded, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, the pass rates and the learning opportunities available to their students, as well as graduate employment information.*

Study Programme compliance

The website contains useful information introducing current and prospective students to the Department, its staff, and activities. The Department should be commended for the wealth and quality of information provided during the visit and on its website.

Information regarding the program (structure, semester schedule, etc.) is available online, but mostly in Greek. The website includes information for those wanting to know more about the program, but most of it is also in Greek. For example, students may find their advisors in the Greek version of the website but not the English one. The policy for quality assurance is available only in Greek – there is no equivalent button to divert students to it in the English version.

In addition, staff cv's are not available. What is available online is useful information about faculty specialization and selected publications but not full and complete cv's. This could be problematic for students wanting to know more about their professors. Including only selected information does not illuminate the full trajectory of interests and activities that may be useful to some students.

Information about the Department's quality assurance policy is available online, but it is "buried" in the Department's website under the "useful documents" link. While there is useful information there, this particular page needs to be re-organized and made more user-friendly.

Although faculty informed AP that syllabi are made available to students in a timely fashion, the AP could not locate them on the Department's website. A small number of course syllabi are included on the *e-class* website, but this is sub-optimal because prospective students or visitors will not know of the website's existence or how to access it. Perhaps a link in an obvious place would go a long way toward advertising the syllabi to external visitors and prospective students. While the syllabi may be made available to students in a timely fashion at the beginning of the semester, prospective (including prospective ERASMUS) students should also be able to explore the likely content beforehand to get a general sense of the topics covered and the likely assignments required.

Finally, information on the website about advertising the Department is not optimized. For example, the first option under the "Department button" seeks to answer the question "why choose us?" AP agrees it is a good idea to market the Department. There is very good information for prospective students on the website, but not in its current form. The Department lists 41 selection reasons grouped under classifications such as teaching, research, etc. This is great but not optimal because many students are unlikely to read all of them. In this way, the Department undermines its very good intent and effort to brand and promote itself.

AP's judgment for this principle is **substantial compliance**.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

AP recommends to:

Include a button next to staff member names that diverts interested readers to the pdf (or html) version of the member's cv.

Update the English version of the website so that the information available to non-Greek speakers is comparable. This will become increasingly important as the Department seeks to internationalize further and invite more Erasmus students.

Give the policy for quality assurance more prominent status by making it its own option under the "student button."

The "student button" in the Department's website has to be re-conceptualized and re-organized to become more user-friendly. Perhaps the Department could survey some students to see what information they are mostly interested in and organize the options in that button along the categories they select. One of the options should include a list of courses, the professors who regularly teach them (it could be more than one), and past or present syllabi to give students an idea of course content.

Re-conceptualize the "why choose us" option, using the following possible format: retain the current headings – teaching, research, etc. – but condense reasons to only two or three per heading; include more pictures to make the site more visually appealing; and most importantly, include student stories or statements narrating why they chose the Program and what they think the Department's strengths are. If these stories are kept to minimum length, say, one paragraph each, prospective and current students will have pithier, more "reliable," and more appealing reasons to be attracted to study at this particular Department. Perhaps advertising reasons to

study at the Department should include the comparatively high rate of attendance, the increased selectiveness of student candidates, and quality professional development available to students. The data already exists and it should be easy for the Department to publicize it.

Principle 9: On-going Monitoring and Periodic Internal Review of Programmes

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD HAVE IN PLACE AN INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM FOR THE AUDIT AND ANNUAL INTERNAL REVIEW OF THEIR PROGRAMMES, SO AS TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVES SET FOR THEM, THROUGH MONITORING AND AMENDMENTS, WITH A VIEW TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT. ANY ACTIONS TAKEN IN THE ABOVE CONTEXT SHOULD BE COMMUNICATED TO ALL PARTIES CONCERNED.

> *Regular monitoring, review and revision of study programmes aim to maintain the level of educational provision and to create a supportive and effective learning environment for students.*
>
> *The above comprise the evaluation of:*
> * *the content of the programme in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up to date;*
> * *the changing needs of society*
> * *the students' workload, progression and completion;*
> * *the effectiveness of the procedures for the assessment of students*
> * *the students' expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme;*
> * *the learning environment, support services and their fitness for purpose for the programme*
>
> *Programmes are reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders. The information collected is analysed and the programme is adapted to ensure that it is up-to-date. Revised programme specifications are published.*

Study Programme compliance

There are several assessments that regularly take place. The first is the annual report that takes stock of publications, courses and other activities conducted by the Department. Its purpose is more to record data rather than to assess strengths or weaknesses. There are two departmental assessment reports, one internal and one external, but they refer to the academic years 2013 and 2014. Quality assurance data are also included on MODIP's website for the years 2015-16 and 2016-17. There is also the University self-assessment report that was published in 2016. These reports are included on MODIP's website.

The annual report provides information in the form of a snapshot of annual departmental activities. The Department has also drafted a strategic plan, complete with an action table, which draws on lessons from the last external assessment. The action table appears to be well structured with specific goals and indicators. It contains a detailed timetable, responsible actor, specific target, and implementation information. The plan is to be commended for its specificity, diligence, and ease of monitoring. The only concern is that it runs to September 2020 with the earliest target date for completing tasks not earlier than September 2019. This makes it difficult for AP to assess the implementation progress. However, the Department appears to be on target and in some cases ahead of schedule, as in the case of increasing student participation in course evaluations.

Although student involvement is considerable, students are not systematically involved in developing goals and specific target indicators. The alumni association works closely with the

Department president to collect and share data on alumni professional development, to enrich the range of contacts, and to support professional opportunities for students.

There is close collaboration between the three important actors involved in quality assurance – MODIP, OMEA, and the Department. Each actor supports and understands the others' work and role in ensuring the highest possible standards.

The only possible concern involves the timely publication of assessment plans and the confusion created by annual reports. Indicators of quality assurance currently include only information regarding the 2016-17 year. The lack of long-term data cannot be attributed to the Department because information is collected and analyzed at a higher level. The lag of information, however, creates problems because department chairs may have to develop strategic and action plans for years to come based on dated information. In addition, annual reports are not designed to encourage assessment of strengths and weaknesses and cannot be a substitute for assessment reports. Quality assurance policy at the department level currently follows a longer time horizon, which in AP's view is more appropriate and useful.

AP's judgement for this principle is **full compliance**.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Continue with the commitment to high standards of quality assurance.

Principle 10: Regular External Evaluation of Undergraduate Programmes

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

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

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

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

Study Programme compliance

The Department is currently undergoing its first undergraduate program accreditation review and has already undergone an external evaluation review. The latter's recommendations resulted in the drafting of an action plan, which has been adopted and implemented. In this case, AP notes with satisfaction that the Department takes the evaluation process seriously and most importantly is willing to act on the recommendations. The faculty, the administrative staff, and the students are intimately involved and understand the importance of the review process. They are enthusiastic supporters.

Although all stakeholders are actively involved in the review process, the participation of external stakeholders is not optimized. The Department actively visits schools and organizations in the region to promote the Department and make its activities better known to the community at large. However, AP noted a lack of active interaction between internal, e.g., faculty, administration, students and support staff, and external stakeholders, e.g., local government, public institutions, business, and non-governmental organizations. While both groups are extremely supportive of departmental activities, there appears to be a miscommunication between the two resulting in the lack of two-way collaboration. For example, while the Department as a whole expressed willingness to listen and act on recommendations for improvements made by external stakeholders (the student internship stakeholders in fact are provided and do respond to a questionnaire for the purpose of improvements) few external stakeholders knew they had the option to interview prospective interns. Close collaboration would help identify curricular or other gaps that need attention and further improvement.

The AP's judgement for this principle in **substantial compliance.**

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The Department should actively engage external stakeholders in a more institutionalized two-way collaborative process. This could involve regular semester meetings with the president or the entire Department. Collaboration now limited to providing student internships should be extended to include employment opportunities and/or training in professional development, such as sharpening interview skills, resume writing, and similar activities. Moreover, the Department should explore the possibility of expanding the range of external stakeholders by approaching local businesses and other private sector organizations beyond NGOs. Some alumni have already found employment in the private sector, e.g., the hospitality sector, which indicates that the Program's alumni are appealing to such businesses. In this way, students will get a better sense of the range of employment possibilities they have available to them and perhaps broaden their future plans to go beyond obtaining graduate degrees.

I.   Features of Good Practice

The Department demonstrates a strong cohesion, which permeates all levels of operations. There is a sincere commitment by everyone in the Department. Each person takes pride in his or her participation and contribution. This is rare and commendable.

The review process witnessed positive measurable outcomes. Graduation rates are high, the number of stagnating students is relatively low, and students generally are supportive and proud of the Department, the faculty, the staff and their studies.

The Department covers a wide-array of subjects and areas of study. This is reflected in the number of courses offered and the diverse area of concentration by the faculty.

The Department demonstrates great flexibility and adaptability of course offerings to accommodate the educational needs of the students by making scheduling changes necessitated by the students' need to study and work at the same time.

The publishing of policies, information, and evaluations is noticeable and it creates a transparent environment that contributes to the Department being effective in its educational goals.

The Department maintains a strong identity, which is becoming a recognizable brand.

II.   Areas of Weakness

Relations with external stakeholders must be deepened and enriched further in the context of the strategic plan.

The absence of a campus life is obvious and glaring and in desperate need for remedial action.

The Department should institutionalize career services to assist students with their job-seeking process. It should provide the students with a broad view of employment prospects. The process should enable students to utilize their educational experience for employment beyond and possibly outside their academic experience or focus of study.

III.   Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

Revitalize the effort to secure a permanent campus.

The diversity of course offerings must be matched by the faculty's area of expertise. Depth should not be sacrificed for breadth.

The budget should reflect all operational costs.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 9.

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: 7, 8 and 10.

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are: 6.

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 Accreditation Panel
for the UGP Political Science and
International Relations of the
University of Peloponnese**

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