



**ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ**  
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



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

**Physical Therapy**

**Institution: University of Peloponnese**  
**Date: 15 October 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 **Physical Therapy** 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 External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel**

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the new undergraduate study programme in operation of **Physical Therapy** of the **University of Peloponnese** comprised the following four (4) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

- 1. Professor Klentrou Panagiota (Chair)**  
Brock University, Niagara Region, Ontario, Canada
  
- 2. Associate Professor Volianitis Stefanos**  
Qatar University, Doha, Qatar
  
- 3. Mrs. Kentrou Evangelia**  
Panhellenic Physiotherapists' Association
  
- 4. Medical Student Noutsos George**  
National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

## II. Review Procedure and Documentation

The External Evaluation and Accreditation Panel (EEAP) had access to the application supporting material submitted to HAHE by the institution sufficiently in advance of the study program review. In summary, the EEAP was provided with: 1) the Accreditation Proposal of the Institution, 2) the Report from MODIP, 3) the Strategic Plan of the Institution, 4) the Feasibility and Viability Study, 5) the Four-year Strategic and Business Plan, 6) the Quality Policy, 7) the S.M.A.R.T. Methodology, 8) the Quality Goals, 9) the Regulations, 10) the Curriculum and Course Descriptions, 11) the Internal Progress Report, and 12) various supplementary material.

On Monday, October 10, 2022, in preparation for the review, the EEAP met and shared their views on the collective approach to the review and establish a common direction for the online meetings and composition of the report. Following their meeting, the EEAP was welcomed by Prof. John Douvis, Vice-Rector for Academic and Student Affairs/President of MODIP and Prof. Maria Tsironi, Head of the Physical Therapy (PT) Department, who delivered a presentation on the objectives, structure, and evaluation of the program. Subsequently, the EEAP met with OMEA & MODIP representatives. Finally, EEAP members had a debriefing meeting to reflect on their impressions and prepared for the second day of the review.

On Tuesday, October 11, 2022, the EEAP had several meetings with stakeholders. The first meeting was with teaching staff, who informed the EEAP about the Department's strategic planning and associated actions, and the degree of compliance with the programme. Faculty members answered EEAP's questions on curriculum, clinical placements, staff mobility, workload allocation, links between teaching and research, and involvement in research activities. Subsequently, the EEAP met with undergraduate students to inquire about students' experiences and satisfaction, their needs and priorities, the quality and adequacy of facilities and services, their views on the curriculum, the academic staff, the processes/policies followed, their professional preparedness, as well as on student-life, and welfare issues. This meeting was followed by a virtual tour of classrooms, lecture halls, libraries, laboratories, and other facilities. The EEAP had the opportunity to pose questions to the relevant staff members regarding capacity, quality, technologies, and equipment needs. Subsequently, the EEAP members met with employers and social partners who offer opportunities for practical experience and collaborations. After this last meeting with stakeholders, the EEAP met briefly to discuss potential gaps in the collected information and prepare final questions for the follow-up meeting with OMEA and MODIP members. Finally, the EEAP met for a closure meeting with the Vice-Rector/President of MODIP, the Head of the Department, OMEA & MODIP with a general discussion on the findings. Then, EEAP members met to reflect and discuss their findings in preparation for the report drafting.

From Wednesday October 12 to Saturday October 15, 2022, the EEAP members drafted and completed the accreditation report before submitting it to HAHE.

### **III. New Undergraduate Study Programme in operation Profile**

The Physical Therapy (PT) Department in Sparta was established in 2019 as a department of the University of Peloponnese. The department was created by Law 4610/2019 and belongs in the Faculty of Health Sciences of the University of Peloponnese. It is the fifth University PT Department in Greece and one of the two Departments of the University of Peloponnese based in Sparta. It should be noted that the department is in operation for only three years, and as such, it operates under a temporary administration. The EEAP was also surprised to find out that the first cohort of students was accepted prior to the hiring of any permanent faculty. This creates a problem for the evaluation of the program as much of the submitted material is based on the future and not actual actions and procedures. Therefore, the evaluation is premature. It is the opinion of this EEAP that new departments and programs should be evaluated after a complete cycle of 7 years of operation when at least one cohort of students has graduated and had the opportunity to demonstrate professional competence.

The mission of the PT Department in Sparta is the promotion, development, and transmission of knowledge in rehabilitation science. This is achieved through appropriate theoretical teaching, basic laboratory, clinical and practical training and applied research, thus providing students with the necessary skills and thorough education for their clinical career and professional development. The main objectives of the department are the theoretical, clinical, and practical education of students, the cultivation of analytical/critical thinking and clinical reasoning and continuous lifelong education.

There is high demand for PT programs in Greece, Europe and beyond. This demand is driven by the wide scope of the discipline, the multi-faceted education offered by the PT departments, and primarily by the variety of job opportunities available to graduates. Physical therapists have the right to work in the public and the private sector either as freelancers or by establishing private clinics according to the current legislation. This wide variety of possibilities for employment is, therefore, the reason for the increased demand and supply Worldwide. This is confirmed by the large number of candidates who declare the Departments of physical therapy as their first, second or even third preference, but also by the high admission rates. Thus, the establishment of a PT Department in the Peloponnese Region, specifically at the University of Peloponnese (PAPEL), has been justified based on the academic and clinical needs related to physiotherapy, the labour market, the geographical distribution of PT Departments in the country, the characteristics of the University of Peloponnese, as well as the development needs of the local society and the country. An important parameter for understanding the importance of the operation of a PT Department in Sparta is the establishment of the new Sparta General Hospital. The PT Department will also contribute to the culture of the Faculty of Health Sciences of PAPEL through the development of interdisciplinary health education and cooperation with the already functioning Departments. It has also the potential to contribute to the effective connection of the University of the Peloponnese with the local community.

The current undergraduate curriculum is offered in 8 semesters and includes 46-47 courses, giving a total of 240 ECTS (210 ECTS in the first 7 semesters and 30 ECTS in the final semester) for overall program completion and degree conferral. Specifically, during the first 7 semesters, the curriculum provides basic theoretical knowledge, laboratory training, as well as professional development with clinical placements. In the 8<sup>th</sup> semester, the students complete a 16-week clinical practicum and can elect to complete a thesis on an assigned topic. Furthermore, the Department and students are highly engaged within the Sparta community through living arrangements, work, projects, volunteering, etc.

In the academic year 2021-2022, two years after the first cohort of students was admitted, the department was staffed with 6 faculty members (another faculty member is expected in 2022) of different disciplinary expertise. In addition, the educational needs of the department are reinforced with teaching staff through limited-term positions and part-time instructors. In the academic year 2021-2022, there were 233 active undergraduate students. At steady state, the department accepts 140 students per year resulting in a total current enrolment of 338. This creates an unsustainable faculty: student ratio of 1:53 that needs to be addressed urgently with additional faculty positions awarded to the department. No postgraduate programs are available yet, but the approval of a doctoral degree program is imminent, with the first PhD students expected in September 2023. The department's physical infrastructure includes a few classrooms and lecture halls, one auditorium, two laboratories used for both teaching and research, nine professors' offices and appropriate secretarial space.

## **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**

### **I. Findings**

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

Physiotherapy training in Greece was provided exclusively by the technological education sector until 2018. Since then, it is only provided by the University sector with a renewed focus on "Rehabilitation Science". The PT Department in Sparta was established in 2019 as a Department in the Faculty of Health Sciences of the University of Peloponnese. It is the fifth University PT department in Greece and one of the two departments of the University of Peloponnese based in Sparta. Since its establishment, the PT Department in Sparta offers an undergraduate program based on the standards set by the World Physiotherapy (former World Confederation for Physical Therapy), aiming to improve the quality of healthcare by offering a high standard of physical therapy education and practice.

The mission of the PT Department in Sparta is to promote the development of theoretical knowledge in rehabilitation science. This is achieved through appropriate theoretical teaching, basic laboratory, clinical and practical training and applied research, thus providing students with the necessary skills and thorough education for their clinical career and professional development. Additionally, the PT Department aims to implement a dynamic and constantly evolving curriculum continuously integrating current knowledge, so that it adapts perfectly to the contemporary needs of healthcare. However, due to its short life, there is little data on the implementation of the proposed/planned strategy, internal and external processes, and curriculum. The program has yet to have any graduates.

#### ***b. The strategy of the Institution for its academic development***

The updated Strategic Plan of the Institution presents its recent academic reconstruction, including an updated SWOT analysis. However, it should be noted that the EEAP was surprised by the decision of the University to have the four departments of the Faculty of Health Sciences located in three different cities. This fractured infrastructure seems problematic for the financial viability and sustainability of academic units like the PT Department. It would be more efficient to distribute the departments of the University of Peloponnese by Faculty, in that an entire Faculty is in the same city. Such a tidy structure will facilitate the sharing of human resources (e.g., basic courses being offered to students of multiple departments), will minimize the duplication of teaching laboratory infrastructure, and will encourage interprofessional clinical placements.

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

The department provided an acceptable Feasibility and Viability Report. However, although the proposed plan sounds good the viability of the department is at critical levels due to the small number of faculty members and limited laboratory infrastructure and clinical placements. To ensure the viability of this PT Department new faculty positions are critical. Diversifying the clinical placements beyond the Sparta General Hospital would also improve the feasibility of proper and adequate clinical preparedness of future graduates. In addition, the viability of the department can largely be achieved through organized and funded research programs and by the addition of PhD candidates as expected in the coming years.

#### ***d. The documentation of the sustainability of the new department***

According to the Feasibility and Viability Report, to achieve sustainability the following support mechanisms should be established, including: 1) continuous review of the curriculum to remain competitive modern and harmonized with the needs of the Greek and European sector reality, 2) development of postgraduate and doctoral programs, 3) development of continuing education programs, 4) participation of the department in local, national and international external events (conferences, workshops, etc.), 5) full exploitation of its "Biomechanics Laboratory" to increase research output. The panel also finds the current laboratory infrastructure limited for the sustainability of the program.

#### ***e. The structure of studies***

The structure of studies is well described and is in accordance with the professional standards. Specifically, the current undergraduate curriculum is offered in 8 semesters and includes 46-47 courses, giving a total of 240 ECTS (210 ECTS in the first 7 semesters and 30 ECTS in the final semester) for overall program completion and degree conferral. Specifically, during the first 7 semesters, the curriculum provides basic theoretical knowledge, laboratory training, as well as professional development with clinical placements. In the 8<sup>th</sup> semester, the students complete a 16-week clinical practicum and can elect to complete a thesis on an assigned topic. The total number of courses offered by the department is fifty-one (51). These courses are divided into the following sub-categories: 21 core courses, 7 elective courses, and 23 specialization courses. There are 4 courses on modern IT methods in the health sector:

1. Health Informatics
2. Biostatistics Functional Systems
3. Electronic Health
4. Intelligent systems of new technologies

#### ***f. The number of admitted students***

At steady state, the department accepts 140 students per year resulting in a total current enrolment of 338. This creates an unsustainable faculty: student ratio that needs to be addressed urgently with additional faculty positions in the department.

#### ***g. Postgraduate studies and research***

Currently, the PT Department in Sparta does not offer postgraduate studies. the approval of a Doctoral degree program is imminent, with the first PhD students expected in September 2023. The current faculty members are showing evidence of some research productivity as expected given the limited number of tenure-track faculty that does not allow sufficient time for research.

## **II. Analysis**

The mission of the PT Department is ambitious and complemented by the commitment of a very dedicated group of academic staff. To this end, the department aims to keep an extrovert strategy with the development of partnerships with public and private agencies. However, due to its short life, there is little data on the implementation of the proposed/planned strategy, internal and external processes, and curriculum. Most activities and procedures have not been

implemented and thus, their feasibility remains questionable. In addition, the strategy of the Institution should reconsider its strategy for the academic development of the PT Department and its position within the current structure and location. To this end, although the curriculum is well organized, the limited number of faculty compared with the increasing number of admissions lowers the viability of the Department. The structure of the studies is well described and is in accordance with the professional standards. However, if the Department continues to admit 140 students per year without an increase in human resources its sustainability and viability will be threatened. To this end, the EEAP remains sceptical about whether the current faculty complement can accommodate a postgraduate and/or doctoral program without a significant increase in the number of faculty.

### **III. Conclusions**

Due to the department's short life, some areas in the documentation need improvement, as they are found partially compliant. Overall, the department is partially compliant with the principle.

## Panel Judgement

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

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

### **Panel Recommendations**

- Ensure implementation and provide evidence on the efficacy of proposed/planned strategy, internal and external processes, and curriculum.
- Improvement of workload and faculty: student ratio with the addition of new tenure-track and tenured faculty positions, as well as technical, administrative, and clinical staff.
- Enhancement of the quality and quantity of the research output among faculty members of the academic unit.
- Proceed with the establishment of clear links between teaching and research through the implementation of the final project, the participation in laboratory instruction and research activities under the coordination of experienced faculty staff.
- Improve laboratory infrastructure, maybe implement laboratory activities in the hospital.
- Annual curriculum reviews should continue to be systematically and successfully conducted in close cooperation with OMEA and MODIP.
- Student participation in the Curriculum Committee is encouraged.
- The EEAP recommends that such accreditation reviews and evaluations should be done after a full cycle when there are some graduated cohorts of students.

## 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

#### I. Findings

The PT Department has in place an Internal Quality Assurance System as evidenced by the formulation and application of a Quality Assurance Policy, and the annual quality assurance goals for the continuous development and improvement of the physical therapy study programme. The main features of the department's Quality Assurance Policy include:

- Alignment with the principles, standards and quality assurance guidelines of the European Higher Education Area, and the National and European institutional framework.
- Promoting the position of the department on the academic map of the country.
- The application of the international code of ethics in all the department's activities.

- Supporting the teaching, clinical and research activities of the faculty members and connecting teaching with research and clinical practice.
- Student-centred teaching, learning and assessment.
- Transparency and public information about its actions.

## II. Analysis

The above findings support that the department has established and operates a quality assurance system as dictated by HAHE.

## III. Conclusions

The department is fully compliant with the principle.

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

No further recommendations.



### **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**

##### **I. Findings**

The design of the academic profile, the structure, the learning outcomes, and the professional qualifications of the PT program aim to meet the specifications of the European and National

Qualifications Framework for Higher Education. In this effort, the following significant weaknesses are relevant:

- Currently, no documented procedure includes the feedback of future graduates in the continuous revisions/updating of the program.
- Currently, no documented procedure considers the feedback of stakeholders/social partners in the development/continuous updating of the program.
- A major weakness of the program is the small number of academic staff (DEP), all of whom are at the assistant professor rank, that not only limits the competent teaching delivery of all required academic subjects, but also encroaches on the faculty: student ratio and, consequently, the teaching workload and research productivity of each of these junior faculty members.
- Regarding the Practicum, a mandatory course in the 8<sup>th</sup> semester, there is no syllabus included in the Study Guide/Courses Syllabi. As such, there is no detailed presentation of the learning outcomes and the method of assessment other than the mention of a questionnaire, which is not presented in the provided documentation.
- Even though a separate Practicum Guide exists, the method of assessment is not focused specifically on the learning outcomes of the Practicum course.

## **II. Analysis**

Even though the design of the program aims to align with the relevant requirement, significant shortcomings prevent satisfactory compliance with this principle.

- The lack of systematic use of students' and stakeholders' feedback in the update of the curriculum limits significantly the process. Understandably, due to the short life of the program, there are no graduates yet. However, regular course evaluations from the students should be used to collect useful feedback.
- The limited number of tenure-track faculty does not allow sufficient time for research, and even though the current faculty members are showing evidence of some research productivity, such productivity is likely not viable in the long term, and thus, the link of teaching with research is threatened.
- Likewise, the limited number of only early career tenure-track faculty also affects the departmental administrative functions, leading to a temporary administration with the current leadership, i.e., the department Chair, being temporarily borrowed from the Department of Nursing. A major concern is that this temporary administration may continue for longer than anticipated as all faculty members are junior and pre-tenured.
- The lack of a proper syllabus concerning the Practicum suggests that the course is not well structured, accessed and communicated to the students and limits the learning outcomes.

## **III. Conclusions**

Even though the program and the curriculum are designed according to the relevant subject academic requirements, nevertheless, there is no proper implementation and, more importantly, significant limitations in the future revisions/update of the curriculum. Seemingly, the limitation in human resources is encroaching not only in the actual teaching delivery but also in critical departmental administrative functions.

## Panel Judgement

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

## Panel Recommendations

The increase in the number of tenure-track and tenured faculty is critical for any potential improvement in compliance with this Principle.

Specific areas that should be addressed are:

- Feedback/input from students and stakeholders should be systematically addressed and incorporated into the regular annual revision of the curriculum.
- The practicum should be more structured. Such structure should be spearheaded by an adequately descriptive syllabus that outlines in detail the learning outcomes, and a method of assessment (rubric) that specifically addresses the academic learning outcomes.
- A permanent administration structure and internal administrative leadership will be necessary moving forward.

## 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**

#### **I. Findings**

There is wide evidence that the student-centred approach is a focal aim of the PT Department. The student-teacher relationship seems to be working very well for the students and the student-centred learning and teaching process was confirmed by the students.

In addition to the traditional modes of delivery (lecturing, written exams, public presentation of small projects by groups or individuals), the programme also offers practical training in the department's labs. Additionally, there is an e-classroom platform, through which every student can find a variety of information about each course, suggestions for references and books, announcements, and notifications by the faculty members, etc. The faculty members also make use of the e-class platform readings for their courses. By using their accounts, the students have full access to the e-class material for all courses.

An evaluation of knowledge and skills that students acquire in each course occurs during both the preclinical (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>) and clinical (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>) years. Assessments are designed to allow students to demonstrate the full extent of the knowledge and skills that they have acquired. The main student assessment methods include written exams, with multiple-choice and other types of questions, as well as oral exams for the labs and for the students that have learning

difficulties. Formal examination procedures and processes are appropriate to the disciplinary subject of each course.

Students have the opportunity to evaluate the teaching (teacher, subject, teaching method) through anonymous surveys conducted electronically each semester. In these evaluation surveys, students answer questions and write comments and suggestions. These surveys serve as feedback to the faculty for making the appropriate changes. The results of these surveys are also distributed and discussed at department meetings, where specific suggestions are made and agreed upon. Importantly, the department has made commendable and successful efforts to increase the level of student participation in the teaching evaluation process and there is an increase in the degree of participation and return of evaluation surveys.

The examination and evaluation procedures are stated clearly in the departmental documentation and all the details are known to the students as they start their studies.

Further evidence concerning the student-centred learning approach was provided to us by the students of the Department who stressed the close relationships developed with the members of the Department.

## II. Analysis

Teaching includes lectures and practical/laboratory training in small groups. The use of e-classroom is used effectively to improve communication between the teaching staff and the students. There is strong evidence that a student-centred approach is embedded in the culture of the department. Student evaluations and feedback are taken seriously.

## III. Conclusions

In general, the Department is compliant with the principle of student-centred learning as there is a variety of teaching and assessment methods, which are evaluated regularly, and changes are done accordingly.

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

The practical assessment evaluation form should be publicized on the online platform of the department.

## **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**

#### **I. Findings**

The Department, in collaboration with the University, has developed a set of clear regulations regarding student progression and the students' overall journey through the degree program. Incoming students are welcomed and guided. There is an orientation event for incoming

students and regular presentations of the academic requirements throughout the first term. Incoming students are given access to all electronic systems.

There is an established examination period. The department applies ECTS across its modules. Programme and examination procedures are established by the department and approved by the University's Quality Assurance Committee. The study programme includes the completion of a thesis course meant to encourage students to be involved in research.

The *Academic Advisor* is regulated. Students can bring any issue to the attention of the *Academic Advisor*, which gives an additional opportunity for the students to be assisted in every aspect of their academic and social life. In addition, faculty members are willing to help students, as students themselves confirmed in the interviews held.

There is institutional support for assisting students with learning disabilities and mental health issues. In addition, a formal appeal process exists if a student is not satisfied with the exam results, the teaching, or any other issues. In the event of an appeal not being resolved internally through the departmental appeals process, the student can submit a formal complaint to the Student Ombudsmen of the University of Peloponnese, which is in Tripolis.

Although the laboratory infrastructure is limited, both faculty and students are satisfied with the overall condition of the Sparta campus, as well as the electronic infrastructure and online platforms available to them. Interviewed students said that they felt well integrated into the academic life of the Department, being even invited to participate in research activities from a very early stage.

Clinical training is in place and is deemed a valuable part of the program for students to develop broader clinical skills. Specifically, clinical placements are offered mainly in the Sparta General Hospital, where students complete a 16-week clinical practicum in the final 8<sup>th</sup> semester of their studies. However, there is concern about the lack of an intensive care unit in the Sparta General Hospital clinical setting. There is also concern about the lack of other clinical opportunities as there are no rehabilitation centres in the broader Sparta region. In the meeting, it was mentioned the establishment of the new Niarchos Hospital is expected to fill this gap; however, this opportunity will not be available for the next 5 years.

## **II. Analysis**

Students are aware of the processes and helped by faculty, they are eased into the academic community. Students feel well-integrated into the academic life of the Department. The clinical placements in the Sparta General Hospital are valuable but limited in scope. Diversification of clinical experience is needed to improve student professional preparedness. To this end, The EEAP congratulates the faculty of the department for the initiative to be the first PT department in the country to establish a collaboration with a school for children with special needs, which offers students a remarkable clinical experience in paediatric physiotherapy.

### III. Conclusions

Overall, procedures concerning student admission, progression, recognition, and certification are based on institutional standards. There is evidence that the PT Department is diligently addressing the self-assessment process and is actively engaged in the continuous improvement of the study programme.

#### Panel Judgement

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

#### Panel Recommendations

It should be clear that students should meet with the *Academic Advisor* at least once in the academic year.



## **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, 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**

#### **I. Findings**

- *Recruitment/Promotion of teaching staff*

The Department follows the legislative framework for the election and development of faculty members, as described by Law.

- *Professional development opportunities for the teaching staff*

Limited use of Erasmus+ for facilitating faculty mobility within the EE. The teaching workload is relatively high (>18 hours per week) and it will potentially limit research productivity.

Currently, the link between teaching and research is deemed satisfactory. There is regular (bi-annual) evaluation of the teaching by the students, and an established procedure for addressing the issues raised both at the individual level by the relevant teaching staff and at the department level through the general assembly.

The department has established two research laboratories (one in Biomechanics and one in Basic Sciences) and has attempted to establish a research strategy within the relevant disciplinary expertise. The research productivity is relatively modest in absolute terms (based on H-indices and citations on Google Scholar) but it can be explained by the relative junior status of the members of staff (all at the assistant professor level).

## II. Analysis

As previously mentioned, the limited number of tenure-track faculty (DEP) is a critical factor that encroaches in all areas of program function.

Specifically, the limited number of faculty does not facilitate mobility initiatives as the course delivery will be further impaired by any decrease in the total number of academic staff.

Additionally, the high teaching workload can potentially limit the further development of research output.

## III. Conclusions

The small number of tenure-track faculty introduces a threat to the continuous and successful development of the existing academic members and could critically compromise future research productivity and ultimately negatively affect the link between teaching and research.

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

It is strongly recommended that the number of academic and professional staff is increased, and more support is provided for the further development of the faculty in terms of research productivity.

## 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

### I. Findings

#### Teaching Infrastructure

The Department is housed in the new Building of the University of Peloponnese in the city of Sparta, which they share with the Department of Sports Organization and Management (DSOM). The teaching areas include an auditorium shared with DSOM, two classrooms and two laboratories (Biomechanics and Basic Science) on the first floor. Laboratory equipment has recently been granted by DSOM in a laboratory on the ground floor. All teaching areas are equipped with modern technological equipment (PC, projector, projection screens, blackboards). The building has a library overseen by one librarian and includes a reading room with a capacity of 20 seats and 11 computers. All users have access to textbooks, e-journals,

e-databases and e-books of international scope through the Consortium of Greek Academic Libraries (HEAL-link). The opening hours of the library are configured according to the needs of the student community at the beginning of the Academic Year. The building also has infrastructure for the disabled (ramps, elevators). Remarkably, student residences are not available in the city of Sparta.

### Human resources

It is important to note that the department still operates under a temporary administration. This operation deficiency is the result of the department having a limited number of faculty members and one EDIP member to support the teaching requirements, as well as one administrative assistant for secretarial support. The ratio of faculty: student is 1:53, which is very high, especially for a clinically oriented programme of study.

Specifically, the Department of Physiotherapy consists of the following permanent personnel:

- Six tenure-track Assistant Professors
- One tenure-track Assistant Professor is to be appointed (the election process has been completed)
- One Information Technology (IT) technician for technical support of the laboratories
- One administrative assistant performing secretarial duties of the Department

Infrastructure and laboratory equipment is insufficient to fulfil the educational needs of the students. In the laboratories where the courses of the undergraduate study program are held, the research programs of the institution are also carried out. Such a configuration limits both the teaching effectiveness and research outcomes of the faculty, a problem which will only get worse with the addition of post-graduate and doctoral students.

### Information to students

The department systematically informs the students with notices on their notice board, through their website (<http://physiotherapy.uop.gr>), and the e-class for matters concerning the courses and the students.

The University of Peloponnese has instituted the Student Ombudsman, which mediates unresolved cases between students and professors or administrative services of the institution. Information is available at <http://foitmer.uop.gr/grafeio-sinigorou/>. However, the Student Ombudsman's office is in Tripoli.

The one staff in the secretariat of the department takes care of the continuous flow of information about the operation of the Study Program and all the structures and services available to students. Lectures are well-scheduled during semesters and examination periods.

## **II. Analysis**

The use of laboratories for both undergraduate teaching and research limits both the teaching effectiveness and research outcomes of the faculty. On the other hand, despite the small number of administrative and technical staff the information and services to students are satisfactory.

Communication with the Student Ombudsman can only be done online, which increases the emotional stress for students to submit a formal complaint, as well as the physical burden and restricts the proceeding of a meaningful adjudication.

### III. Conclusions

The department still operates under temporary administration due to the small number of teaching and administrative staff. While the department operates sufficiently and services to students are satisfactory, urgent upgrades are needed. Otherwise, the inadequacies of human and physical resources can compromise the sustainability of the curriculum, the feasibility of clinical training, and the quality of student services.

#### Panel Judgement

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

#### Panel Recommendations

- Increasing the number of tenure-track and tenured faculty members in the Department, the addition of one laboratory supervisor, one clinical placement coordinator and a second administrative staff will be an important factor in strengthening the academic activity.
- There is an immediate need to improve the laboratory infrastructure. Specifically, the separation of research and teaching laboratories is crucial.

## **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**

#### **I. Findings**

The PT Department conducts internal and external quality assessments and uses appropriate sources and documentation for its current internal report that is comprehensive, clear, forthright, and self-critical and follows the expected format. The faculty members and teaching staff of the department used appropriate internationally accepted scientific and educational practices, processes, and methods for effective teaching throughout the four years of studies. The lectures consist of theoretical presentations, clinical experiences, as well as practical activities in the laboratories. This process is successfully supported by modern technological and electronic tools.

Despite the high workload, the academic members make efforts to be available to students. Students reported high satisfaction with faculty contact and availability. The quality of teaching is high and comparable with international standards. Overall, the students are satisfied with the department's curriculum. The textbooks or articles proposed in every course are of excellent quality and the material covered is up to date, including recent scientific developments.

The PT Department's secretariat is well organized, and staffed with one administrative assistant, who is dedicated and collaborates efficiently with faculty and students. The students, mainly through the web pages of the department, are well-informed about the education program (courses, schedule, learning goals, examinations etc.). In principle, the department supports the electronic communication between faculty, students, and administrative staff

and is benefited from integrated facilities in the Sparta campus (i.e., library, and teaching areas).

## II. Analysis

The faculty: student ratio is 1:53, which is assessed as non-acceptable compared to international standards. However, student satisfaction is high due to the dedication of faculty and staff, and the quality of teaching, which is comparable with international standards. However, it should be noted that there are no graduates of the programme to confirm whether the program provides adequate clinical and professional preparedness.

## III. Conclusions

Despite the high workload standards, the academic members make serious efforts to sustain the student-centred approach. However, resources are needed to sustain this level of education and satisfaction.

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

Increase the number of the department's secretariat, laboratory, and clinical staff.

## **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**

#### **I. Findings**

The PT Department in Sparta has developed a complete website in Greek. All pertinent student-related information is accessible through the department's website. However, only a part of the website is in English.

The PT Department has tried to establish a network of potential external, and local stakeholders, mainly the General Hospital of Sparta, which are actively involved in the clinical placement of students. The department has also established partnerships with a small number of stakeholders nationally. The stakeholders that the EEAP met with are eager to get engaged and help the department achieve its goals. There is no established advisory committee to keep open communication and exchange ideas with the community partners/stakeholders.

#### **II. Analysis**

As only a small part of the website is in English, the effectiveness of the program's public communication and its ability to attract non-local stakeholders and international students through ERASMUS is compromised and the department's extroversion is limited.

Extra-curriculum activities and student engagement in events, and other opportunities to disseminate practices and innovation in physical therapy are limited.

#### **III. Conclusions**

Due to its short life, the information provided by the department for prospective students, future graduates, other stakeholders, and the public is in development.



## Panel Judgement

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

## Panel Recommendations

To further solidify and enhance adherence to this Principle, the EEAP recommends the following additional action:

- The department should further develop and update its website in English.
- The department should consider an active communication strategy with its constituencies and community partners, for example by issuing and emailing periodic newsletters.
- The department should consider expanding its extra-curriculum activities and stakeholder network.
- The department should collaborate with the Department of Sports Organization and Management, with whom they share the Sparta campus, to develop a multidisciplinary curriculum and extra-curriculum activities.
- Potential services provided by the specialized equipment and expertise existing in the department should be broadly published. The development of a University Rehabilitation Centre supervised by faculty and resourced with student trainees could provide affordable health services to the local community and serve as additional practical experience for senior students. This may also be a source of additional income to support student initiatives, equipment renewal, student mobility and industry placements, etc.

## 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**

#### **I. Findings**

The PT Department's OMEA, in collaboration with the MODIP, monitors and reviews the undergraduate program on an annual basis. This committee is also responsible for coordinating the process of assessing student satisfaction by means of electronic questionnaires. In this respect, it is noteworthy that in recent years the number of students participating in this evaluation process has increased. According to the students' statements in the meeting held with the EEAP, students are satisfied with the good atmosphere of the Department and with their involvement in its activities. They also stressed that their demands and needs are usually met by the members of the Department.

The internal review and resulting changes to the study program are based on student evaluations and faculty proposals to the appropriate committee. To this end, the OMEA also collaborates with the curriculum, teaching and learning committee(s) to annually reassess and readjust the curriculum offered. Specifically, all data collected during the internal review process are discussed in the Departmental Council. This allows the department to make

amendments to the undergraduate programme, when necessary, to update it according to recent developments and new trends in the discipline to meet the changing needs of society.

There is no evidence that the department has an impact on the professional development of graduates as there are no graduates, yet. Participation of graduates, stakeholders, and academic members in the Erasmus+ Academic Mobility Program is part of the department's future and was mentioned in the meeting held with the EEAP. However, such activities have yet to be realized. However, the department encourages students to participate in various education and research opportunities for their future careers and a better international presence and research collaborations with other institutions. These attempts include continuous efforts to upgrade the research output of the department. Thus, it is expected that the link between teaching and research will gradually improve.

During our online meeting, all members of the department were actively engaged in the evaluation process. All meetings were conducted in a very constructive atmosphere, with all members showing interest to collaborate with the EEAP and providing all information required.

## II. Analysis

Overall, the Department is aware of the importance of internal reviews and has taken steps to improve in all the relevant areas. The programme is reviewed and revised regularly. The OMEA oversees the collection and communication of the data from all evaluation processes. The information collected is analysed and the programme is adapted to ensure that it is up to date. The findings of the evaluation processes are shared within the academic unit and addressed in the Departmental Assembly in order to establish action plans.

## III. Conclusions

The PT Department intends to maintain regular monitoring, review, and revision of the study programme with the purpose to maintain a high level of educational quality, creating a supportive and effective learning environment for students and meeting the students' expectations, needs and satisfaction.

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

Future feedback from all involved stakeholders and alumni for monitoring the professional career will be required moving forward.

## **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**

#### **I. Findings**

The PT program of the University of Peloponnese has not undergone previous external evaluation, and therefore, this Principle cannot be evaluated on the basis of the department's compliance with any recommendations.

Furthermore, significant effort has been made by the department to prepare the Accreditation Proposal and all relevant supporting documentation.

#### **II. Analysis**

With regards to the present external evaluation, the department and all the faculty members, and administrative and technical staff were aware of the importance of the external review and its contribution to improvement.

#### **III. Conclusions**

In absence of a previous external evaluation, the EEAP submits a substantially compliant rating because of the positive attitude and effort that the members of the department showed towards the present evaluation process irrespective of the short life of their department and the early/pre-mature accreditation review.

## Panel Judgement

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

## Panel Recommendations

No further recommendation.

## **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**

Not applicable.

## **PART C: CONCLUSIONS**

### **I. Features of Good Practice**

- The mission of the PT Department is ambitious and complemented by the commitment of a very dedicated group of academic staff.
- The PT Department has in place an adequate Internal Quality Assurance System as evidenced by the formulation and application of a Quality Assurance Policy, and the annual quality assurance goals for the continuous development and improvement of the Physical Therapy study programme.
- The design of the academic profile, the structure, the learning outcomes, and the professional qualifications of the PT program aim to meet the specifications of the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education.
- The structure of studies is well described and is in accordance with the professional standards.
- The department, in collaboration with the University of Peloponnese, has developed a set of clear regulations regarding student progression and the overall student's journey through the degree program. Incoming students are welcomed and guided by faculty members.
- There is wide evidence that the department aims to maintain a student-centred approach. The faculty members are dedicated to the advancement of the program, and work hard to maintain high educational and professional standards. Hence, students are satisfied with the curriculum and learning experience while the student-teacher relationship seems to be working very well.
- An evaluation of acquired knowledge and skills occurs during both the preclinical (1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup>) and clinical (3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>) years. Assessments are designed to allow students to demonstrate the full extent of the knowledge and skills that they have acquired.
- Clinical training is in place as an essential integral part of the program.
- A novel clinical opportunity in a school of children with special needs is established, which is remarkable for a new department to become the first PT department in Greece to offer clinical experience in paediatric physiotherapy.
- The main student assessment methods include both written and oral exams according to the learning outcome assessed and the disciplinary area of each course. The examination and evaluation procedures are stated clearly in the departmental documentation and all the details are known to the students as they start their studies.
- The students have the opportunity to evaluate the teaching (teacher, subject, teaching method) through anonymous surveys conducted electronically each semester.
- There is regular (bi-annual) evaluation of the teaching staff by the students, and an established procedure for addressing the issues raised both at the department level through the general assembly and at the relevant teaching staff level.
- The PT Department intends to maintain regular monitoring, review, and revision of the study programme with the purpose to maintain a high level of educational quality,

creating a supportive and effective learning environment for students and meeting the students' expectations, needs and satisfaction.

## **II. Areas of Weakness**

- Due to the short life of the department, some areas in the documentation and the current structure need improvement, as they are found partially compliant.
- The major weakness of the program is the small number of academic staff, which not only limits the competent teaching delivery of all required academic subjects, but also encroaches on the faculty: student ratio and, consequently, the teaching and service workload for each faculty member.
- The small number of tenure and tenure-track faculty introduces a threat to the continuous and successful development of the existing academic members and could critically compromise future research productivity and ultimately negatively affect the link between teaching and research.
- The limited number of only early career tenure-track faculty also affects the departmental administrative functions, leading to a temporary administration with the current leadership being temporarily borrowed from the Department of Nursing. A major concern is that this temporary administration may continue for longer than anticipated as all faculty members are junior and pre-tenured.
- Limited use of Erasmus+ for facilitating faculty mobility within the EE. The teaching workload is relatively high (>18 hours per week) and it is potentially limiting research productivity.
- Currently, no documented procedure includes the feedback of future graduates in the continuous revisions/updating of the program.
- Currently, no documented procedure considers the feedback of stakeholders/social partners in the development/continuous updating of the program.
- Regarding the Practicum, a mandatory course in the 8<sup>th</sup> semester, there is no syllabus included in the Study Guide/Courses Syllabi. As such, there is no detailed presentation of the learning outcomes and the method of assessment other than the mention of a questionnaire, which is not presented in the provided documentation. Even though a separate Practicum Guide exists, the method of assessment is not focused specifically on the learning outcomes of the Practicum course.
- These clinical placements are all in the Sparta General Hospital. However, there is concern about the lack of an intensive care unit in the Sparta General Hospital clinical setting. There is also concern about the lack of other clinical opportunities as there are no rehabilitation centres in the broader Sparta region. The establishment of the new Niarchos Hospital is expected to fill this gap; however, this opportunity will not be available for the next at least 5 years.

## **III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions**

- Moving forward, the department should provide tangible evidence of the efficacy of the proposed/planned strategy, internal and external processes, and curriculum.



- Improvement of workload and faculty: student ratio with the addition of new tenure-track faculty positions, as well as technical, administrative, and clinical staff. It is strongly recommended that the number of both the academic and professional staff; specifically, the addition of tenure-track and tenured faculty members in the Department, one laboratory supervisor, one clinical placement coordinator and a second administrative staff will be an important factor in strengthening the academic mission and the smooth administration of the department.
- Increased support should be provided for the further development of the existing faculty members in terms of research productivity as improvement of the quality and quantity of the research output of faculty members is necessary.
- A permanent administration structure and internal administrative leadership will be necessary moving forward.
- Proceed with the establishment of clear links between teaching and research through the implementation of the final project, the participation in laboratory instruction and research activities under the coordination of experienced faculty staff.
- There is an immediate need to improve the laboratory infrastructure. Specifically, the separation of research and teaching laboratories is crucial. Potential integration of the hospital's laboratory may assist in this matter.
- Student participation in the Curriculum Committee is encouraged.
- Feedback/input from future graduates and stakeholders should be systematically addressed and incorporated into the regular annual revision of the curriculum.
- The practicum should be more structured with an adequately descriptive syllabus that outlines in detail the learning outcomes, and a method of assessment (rubric) that specifically addresses the academic learning outcomes.
- The practical assessment evaluation form should be publicized on the online platform of the department.
- It should be entirely clear that students should meet with the *Academic Advisor* at least once in the academic year.
- The department should further develop and update its website in English.
- The department should consider an active communication strategy with its constituencies and community partners, for example by issuing and emailing periodic newsletters.
- The department should consider expanding its extra-curriculum activities and stakeholder network. Specifically, the department should collaborate with the Department of Sports Organization and Management, with whom they share the Sparta campus, to develop a multidisciplinary curriculum and extra-curriculum activities.
- Potential services provided by the specialized equipment and expertise existing in the department should be broadly published. The development of a University Rehabilitation Centre supervised by faculty and resourced with student trainees could provide affordable health services to the local community and serve as additional practical experience for senior students.
- Future feedback from future alumni for monitoring their professional careers will be required moving forward.

#### IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: **2, 4, 5, and 10.**

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **6, 8, and 11.**

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are: **1, 3, 7, and 9.**

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

Overall Judgement	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	<b>X</b>
Non-compliant	

## The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname

Signature

- 1. Professor Klentrou Panagiota (Chair)**  
Brock University, Niagara Region, Ontario, Canada
- 2. Associate Professor Volianitis Stefanos**  
Qatar University, Doha, Qatar
- 3. Mrs. Kentrou Evangelia**  
Panhellenic Physiotherapists' Association
- 4. Medical Student Noutsos George**  
National and Kapodistrian University of Athens