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ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΣΤΗΝ ΑΝΩΤΑΤΗ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗ

HELLENIC REPUBLIC
HQA
HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE
AND ACCREDITATION AGENCY

Accreditation Report
for the Undergraduate Study Programme of:
Educational Sciences and Early Childhood Education
University of Patras
Date: 29th February 2020

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



Report of the Panel appointed by the HQA to undertake the review of the Undergraduate Study Programme of **Educational Sciences and Early Childhood Education** of the **University of Patras** 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 **Educational Sciences and Early Childhood** of the **University of Patras** comprised the following four (4) members, drawn from the HQA Register, in accordance with the Law 4009/2011:

- 1. Professor John Spiridakis (Chair)**
St. John's University, New York City, USA

- 2. Professor Mary Kalantzis**
University of Illinois, Champaign, USA

- 3. Professor Christos Panagiotopoulos**
University of Nicosia, Nicosia, Cyprus

- 4. Professor Helen Phtiaka**
University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

The Accreditation Panel (AP) visited the Department of Educational Sciences and Early Childhood Education, hereinafter “Department”, from 24-29 February 2020. Prior to our visit, the AP received the material sent by the Department to HQA including but not limited to the External Evaluation report (2013) and their most recent Internal Evaluation Reports.

During the AP’s visit, its members met and interviewed the following groups:

On Tuesday 25th of February, the AP met with the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs of the University of Patras (Prof. Nikolaos Karamanos) Members of MODIP including the Department’s representative (Prof. Athanasios Karalis), Head of Department (Prof. Marianna Kondyli). Prof. Karamanos introduced the UoP and the Department to the AP and continued his presentation on issues related to research output, compliance of the University with the recommendations of MODIP and previous assessments. According to his presentation, the AP was informed that the department had fully complied with requirements of both internal and external evaluations. It was reported that for the past three years the Department has been ranked first in teaching amongst all UoP departments. Following Prof. Karamanos’ presentation, the Head of the Department introduced the Department’s goal and aims, its curriculum and future plans.

The AP also met with OMEA representatives (Prof. Konstantinos Zacharos and Dr. Alexandra Mouriki). A brief introduction of the aims and goals of OMEA was given. Then the representatives of OMEA provided information on the policy of quality assurance and the process of restructuring the academic curriculum following the Department’s external evaluation in 2013. The AP met with academic staff (n=8) of the Department and had a discussion concerning progress made since the last external evaluation.

Thereafter, the AP met with current students (n=6) in their 4th year of studies. Issues were discussed related to the curriculum, reasons for choosing this particular department and how students compared this particular department with others. The AP met with graduates (n=6) either face to face or online. The first day concluded with meeting external community partners.

On the second day of the visit, 26th of February 2020, the AP members visited the Departmental buildings, the Science Museum, the University Childcare Centre, (both of which have developed collaborative activities with the Department), and the University library. At the end of the visit the AP met again with Prof. Karamanos, representatives of MODIP and the head of the Department to debrief and exchange preliminary views.

III. Study Programme Profile

The Department of Educational Sciences and Early Childhood Education was founded in 1983 (initially as the Department of Early Childhood Education), aiming at the development of research in the Sciences of Education and the provision of academic education to educators of pre-school age students. From its inception, the Department has evolved into an institution where all those sciences, which are internationally defined as Sciences of Education, are cultivated both at the level of teaching and research. The mission of the Department has been and remains, to promote cutting edge pedagogy and to prepare culturally responsive and technologically savvy, skilled pre-school educators. The Department explores modern trends in Educational Sciences that emerge as a consequence of changes that take place in educational systems both internationally and in Greece. Graduating students receive a Degree of the Department of Educational Sciences and Early Childhood Education of the University of Patras (UoP). Undergraduate studies are required to be completed in no less than four years or eight semesters (240 ECTS).

The Department's courses cover a wide range of educational topics, including Science Education, Mathematics Education, Statistics, Information and Communication Technology in Education, Biology Education, Pedagogy, Curriculum Development, Psychology, Neurosciences, Sociology of Education, Educational Policy and Planning, Life-long Learning, Comparative Education, Sociolinguistics, Literature, Cultural, Anthropology, Arts, Science Museums Education, Didactics of Rhythm and Movement, History of Education, Philosophy, Children's Rights, Research Methods etc.

The Department is populated with well qualified teaching and research staff. It has 23 academic staff and 9 Special Teaching staff, 2 technical support staff and 2 administrators. The Department serves approximately 1060 undergraduate students, 50 postgraduate students and 65 PhD students.

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 incorporated in its operation a strong quality assurance policy. The Department informed the AP in its Internal Report and during interviews, that it had begun seriously evaluating its operation since 2003. This has been facilitated either by internal (UoP) or external, international bodies. The department had responded to the recommendations within its purview made by the previous external evaluation team. One member of the department has also become a representative member of MODIP and has had a long-standing involvement with the internal evaluation process of the Department. High scores in teaching evaluation indicate that the Department is responding to the need for continuous assessment by students. The Department has developed a variety of courses that strongly relate to the needs of society and the labour market. During interviews, students noted this as a highlight of

the Department. They felt they were provided skills and knowledge to also work in other areas (e.g. adult learning, IT in education) apart from early childhood education. The new State Law that has established compulsory early childhood education for children 4-6 years of age will impact the demand for early childhood educators which is expected to increase. The Department is constantly reviewing its operation including, but not limited to, collaborating with the early childhood education professional bodies to ensure its curriculum is responding to current and future needs.

The profiles of academic staff members of the Department demonstrate that they have the necessary skills and knowledge to provide quality teaching and research. Indeed, the AP was satisfied that, as stated in its recent Internal Evaluation Report, the academic staff had taken dramatic steps to modify the curriculum and coursework in the years since the external quality assurance evaluation of 2013. It was also noted that a number academic staff are undertaking evaluations locally and internationally – for example the UNICEF sponsored project of student refugees

The Department also provides a range of library services to its student either through the main library or through a number of departmental libraries which serve specific needs.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- It is recommended that the Department reviews its library holdings and consider integrating the various departmental libraries with the main library to update them and make them more accessible.

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

Participants interviewed provided evidence to support the Department's claims of pursuing the goal of designing and delivering rigorous course offerings informed by research. Academic staff and documentation presented testified to the many ways in which the department kept abreast of changes and expectations within the Greek Higher Education system as well as tracking emerging imperatives in comparable institutions nationally and internationally. Of particular note is the high standing of the natural sciences/STEM stream of offerings and the associated Museum of Science. A number of course offerings dealing with environmental issues are also commendable. Equally significant has been the evolution of a set of Humanities/Social Science offerings that provide a sound grounding in meaning making, social and emotional well-being and linguistic and cultural factors in learning. The significant outreach to address the educational needs of refugee communities is to be applauded. As is the Children's Festival and the Early Childhood Centre which create a valuable bridge between the department and the local community.

Student participants expressed satisfaction with the broad range of course offerings and their learning experiences. They also affirmed that they were provided with general support from academic and administrative staff. They seemed confident that they were well prepared to meet

their aspirations as professionals and educators. The Department was proud of a number of their graduates who had been recruited by international institutions and significant professional bodies. The extended practicum, since the last external review, certainly strengthened student preparation for the workforce. The Department has initiated a rigorous process for the review of its courses and curriculum that includes input from external experts and professional bodies and other stakeholders.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The Department as a whole, needs to come together to reflect on and refine its very large number of electives. These need aligning more closely with its strategic goals and its peaks of excellence, i.e. its two main disciplinary clusters - as determined through a collective process.
- The Department should ensure a balance between the current emphasis on STEM and IT cluster with its cluster of offerings in the humanities/social sciences that includes, intercultural studies/ anthropology of education, families/communities, schools and society, literacy and translingualism, curriculum development and inclusive, differentiated/culturally responsive pedagogy.
- The Department should continue to expand its internationalization efforts and the use of new technology to deal with large cohorts of students in compulsory courses – including for instance, flipped classroom, hybrid classes, peer to peer, and collaborative learning strategies.

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

As noted in the Internal Evaluation Report, and as borne out during the AP's meetings with academic staff and students, student achievement, career success and satisfaction are truly at the heart of the Department's mission. The AP obtained evidence during its meetings of a convivial relationship between students and academic staff in the Department. Students stated that they feel free to consult with academic staff at all times on all topics and declared that they always receive support from academic staff in every aspect of their studies. Academic staff and students during the AP meetings confirmed that courses are delivered using a variety of teaching methods. Also noted by the AP, is that there is a very high response rate in student course evaluations. Academic staff stated that student evaluations and suggestions are taken into account for course improvement. The large number of electives in the program allows students to choose and formulate their own programme interest areas. In this way the students become responsible for their own learning under academic staff guidance. It was reported to the AP that schools which hire the Department's graduates find them work ready and competent.

There is also in place a stated policy and procedures for students to appeal grades and a variety of related course issues. Policies and practices are also in place to accommodate students with learning disabilities. The UoP has a designated site to assist in this endeavour. (<http://eko.upatras.gr/en>).

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Currently, students participate in the Department meetings and they can voice their opinions regarding their programme of study in that forum. It is suggested that there should be a student member of the ad hoc Department programme committee, so that their participation becomes more formal.

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 maintains good records of student attendance and participation in classes, mainly through the school practice registry, and the number of students who complete their degree on time is quite high. The Department is already applying the use of the Diploma Supplement for its students. The effective use of the ECTS system allows mobility of the students under the Erasmus programme. The students reported that they were aware of their duties and responsibilities. They also indicated that the school practice handbook, created in response to recommendation of the prior external report, is a good example of the effective planning and communication of the Department. The students interviewed indicated that they are confident and optimistic about their future employment. They also reported that their ambitions include the pursuit of graduate programmes in the future, either at the UoP or elsewhere.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations.

- Although the Department is ranked second in the University in terms of numbers of student mobility, there seems to still be room for improvement in this domain. Many

students are unwilling to participate in Erasmus exchanges apparently due to financial or family concerns.

- It is suggested that the Department, and the UoP as a whole, highlight the successful experiences of students who return from Erasmus programmes, in order to promote the Erasmus programme to the more hesitant students.

Principle 5: Teaching Staff

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

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

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

Study Programme compliance

The Department follows established higher education procedures. It recruits academic staff with both research and teaching backgrounds. The Department currently has 23 academic staff and 9 special teaching staff. According to evidence provided by the Department there are 11 Professors, 6 Associate Professors, 6 Assistant Professors. Evidence provided during our visit showed that the Department of Early Childhood Studies of UoP is encouraging scholarly activity (publications, conferences, research) despite their financial restraints. Evidence indicated a sustainable number of publications in the past five years (43, 43, 42, 36, 55). A number of academic staff has produced a very high number of publications with high numbers of citations. The Department has global links with the University of Delaware, Monash University, University of Nicosia and Universite de Bretagne Occidentale. The Department publishes two English journals (Educational Journal of the UoP and Review of Science, Mathematics in Education).

According to data provided, the Department itself has attracted approximately 0.5million euros for the years 2016-17 from internal or external funding. The Department provides the opportunity to its students to engage with hands on practice and involvement in research activities, even on a voluntary basis (see refugee programmes, Children's Festival). Students are given the chance to implement theoretical knowledge into practice and thereby are also able to share their experiences with academic staff and peers.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- It is expected that the support and development of the social science and humanities area will lead to more research and publication opportunities for academic staff associated with this area or discipline cluster.

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 has clearly, conscientiously and diligently taken up the suggestions and recommendations of previous evaluations and has upgraded their facilities with the help of the UoP. The AP was pleased to witness many improvements in the Department infrastructure. The computer lab is a good example of this. A new space was allocated, and a small fund also helped set up a large number of areas with up to date, useful equipment. The same is true of the old nursery which is now used as a class and practice area for the department's students who work with young children from the adjacent kindergarten. There are more lecture rooms and the labs have been upgraded. The use of digitization across the Department is another great improvement and facilitates all aspects of the Department's functions. There seems to be adequate student support both in terms of assistance and access, and in terms of career orientation. In addition, the AP members were impressed by the Main library service and its future potential.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations.

- Despite the definite improvements, the Department facilities are still in need of improvement. The buildings are very old and in urgent need of repair as “concrete cancer” seems to have set in in some cases and there is a danger of accidents from the damaged and uneven concrete.
- Another large amphitheatre would also facilitate teaching arrangements. In the long term it would be advisable for the two Departments of Education to be collocated in a new appropriate building in order to enhance academic synergies and to economize resources. This is obviously a State and a UoP responsibility.
- In addition, it bears noting that there is, under the auspices of the University, a Science Museum which appears to be doing very interesting work with schools that warrants better support and utilization by the UoP and the Department. The resources supporting the practicum needs to be enhanced and more space should be made available for group work.

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 analysing information and planning follow-up activities.

Study Programme compliance

The documentation reviewed by the AP was comprehensive and provided evidence of sound and ongoing data collected on key significant factors, including take-up of prerequisite, core and elective courses, progress in knowledge and skills, practicum and examination components of courses, and participation in practicums. Data on student profiles are systematically collected. We noted that data provided indicated that over 70% completed their studies on time with another 20 % within 6 years. Data was also available on the number of students with disabilities, gender, Erasmus students, course participation, progress and graduation rates. Student/faculty ratios provided indicate that teaching loads are heavy especially in compulsory courses.

The Department is rightly proud of the cultural change that had occurred with regard to data collection and evaluation processes. It was reported that it ranked highly across the university in the collection and reporting processes of such requirements.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- It is vital that the data collected is shared broadly with all Departmental members to guide their decision making and practices.
- In addition, there is a need to develop a viable and comprehensive strategy to trace graduates and their career or academic pathways (e.g. alumni, retreats, links to professional advice services offered by the University). This is important given that graduates seem to have uneven access to public schools and other employment opportunities.
- Information on student needs and capacity to afford to study need to be gathered. Means need to be developed for integrating students who are registered but unable to attend classes, perhaps as a consequence of financial or family crisis or because they are employed.

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

A perusal of the online resources available reveals accurate, up-to-date documents related to the Department program, courses and requirements as well as timelines. There exists an excellent level of information-sharing as well as transparency for prospective students. Critical information needed by students or applicants or any interested party is published and available on the UoP website. The UoP publishes online all relevant curricula both in Greek and English. Transparency within the bounds of applicable regulations includes a very useful special MODIP led publicized information.

The system site provides valuable information to faculty and administrators by enabling retrieval of data such as five years of student course evaluations. Also included on the site are profiles of academic staff productivity that include publications, external funding, Erasmus activities, history of citations, community service initiatives, and many other relevant categories. In keeping with the UoP's and Department's goal of transparency of vital information, all prior Internal and External Evaluations are available to the public.

The UoP library also hosts an interactive platform that provides UoP information highlights such as faculty achievements and UoP's external university partners including the many global partners and MOUs in place.

It was reported that the Department shares important information in a weekly online newsletter (esos.gr) promulgated throughout Greece.

Students and academic staff also reported on the role of social media such as Facebook in fostering communication about relevant and interesting Department-related social and cultural activities.

Especially noteworthy is the initiative which begun last year to maintain the email addresses of graduates in order to maintain communication.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Stories about distinguished alumni, both new and older, could be featured as part of the Department's online identity to highlight the efficacy of the program in preparing students for teaching, administration and other positions. The AP members were impressed with the variety of employment of graduates and their notable achievements. The Department should publicize its considerable success in preparing not only early childhood education personnel with STEM talent but also early childhood personnel, and other personnel with talent, proficiency in cultural inclusion, language education, literacy and the social sciences. The Department should also highlight the many graduates who pursue further graduate studies either at UoP or other institutions, domestic or abroad.
- Along the same line, the Department should strengthen and showcase its efficacy in preparing talented students whose passions may lie in either STEM or Humanities/Social Science areas associated with early childhood. The two defacto domains or discipline clusters that comprise the curriculum, could benefit from greater Departmental effort that leads to a greater degree of parity – for example in hiring choices, availability of seed funding and mentoring. Both discipline clusters have the potential to attract increased research funding and make significant impact that enhance the profile of the Department and University.

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

The AP verified through the documents and interviews that the department has in place mechanisms to regularly review all aspects of its programme. This practice ensures a supportive and effective learning environment for students. Students are part of the programme's revision through a representative in the Departmental Council that takes place each year. In addition, the new structure of the practicum fostered by the Department after the previous assessment in 2013, has helped students to be engaged in more field experience and practice. Small groups of students in the elective courses provide a learning environment that satisfies students' expectations in relation to the programme's needs. The Department has in place a continuous evaluation system of each academic staff member by the students. This process ensures the sustainability of the Department programme and it provides an internal quality assurance system to achieve its objectives and monitor its development. All this data is published on an online management information system that every academic staff member has access to.

External partners periodically provide input on the academic curriculum although this does not happen on a regular and structured basis. The internal quality assurance process analyses and subsumes prior external evaluation input for appropriate action.

The initiative of the past year to enable students to evaluate their entire program after completion promises to yield additional valuable information to enhance faculty/student engagement and needed curriculum reform.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The Department could put in place an advisory board including academic staff, students, external partners, service users that could provide input and feedback to ensure that the academic curriculum reflects social and cultural reality and trends.

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

There is a clear and distinct history of compliance with the principle of Quality Assurance through external evaluations. UoP was at the forefront of the Quality Assurance/Evaluation participating voluntarily in a higher education evaluation project in 1999 of the Ministry of Education that involved evaluation of the entire university, well before the 2005 regulation creating ADIP and, in turn, MODIP and OMEA teams to implement the Quality Assurance evaluation mandate. The OMEA for each UoP academic unit completed Internal Evaluations beginning in 2008. From 2011 to 2014 all UoP departments were evaluated by external evaluation committees, including the Department that was evaluated in 2014. As noted earlier, the Department in keeping with the principle herein, immediately set out to successfully address the recommendations within its purview. The needs of the students were addressed in several respects, including, but not limited to, a dramatic increase in the program's practical training component. In 2018, UoP was the first in Greece to complete the External Evaluation of the entire university. The AP for the review at hand recognized the keen knowledge of the seminal 2014 external evaluation reflected in our lengthy discussions and interviews with the current members of MODIP and OMEA, along with the Dean, Department Chair and Department faculty. Also, our discussions with the current students, academic staff members, alumni and external partners revealed a convivial relationship with the Department Head and faculty members; these stakeholders seemed ready and eager to share their views on programmatic matters including, but not limited to, pedagogy, course content and efficacy of the overall program. The Department has demonstrated its will to analyse and address the findings, conclusions and recommendations of internal and external evaluations.

Clearly, the Department has benefitted from the extensive evaluation expertise and experience of the MODIP leadership of the UoP Vice Rector and Department representative, Professor

Karalis, with the valuable input from the Dean, Department Head and faculty that was evident at our meetings with all of the aforementioned. The claims made in the current, comprehensive Internal Evaluation proved that there was a collaborative effort on the part of MODIP, OMEA, the Dean, Department Chair and faculty, through its relevant committee work, to assure compliance with the recommendations made in the most recent External Evaluation.

As another testament to the UoP's - and Department's - fidelity to the objectives of the Quality Assurance evaluation principle, the UoP will celebrate its 20th anniversary of same.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The UoP and the Department need to be congratulated for having admirably performed this principle and its correlates with a high degree of integrity.

Part C: Conclusions

I. Features of Good Practice

- The Department appears to have an excellent social profile and a true concern for its community both inside and outside the University.
- We were impressed by the yearly Children's Festival, and the student voluntary work regarding the refugee children both on the Greek islands and the Peloponnese. We believe that this activity should be highly commendable for Departments of this orientation as it benefits the students first and foremost and also the wider community and it offers opportunities for personal development and work experience.
- The inclusion of field experiences throughout the curriculum/coursework and expanded practicum reflect a clinically-rich component that has benefitted the students.

II. Areas of Weakness

- The faculty student ratio seems to be very high (47,5%) even by Greek University standards. This needs to be addressed by the Department, UoP although we recognize it is a consequence of Ministry of Education policies.
- The Department needs to establish a mechanism for fostering and strengthening collaboration across and within the core disciplines within the Department and across the University.
- The continuing lack of adequate and suitable classroom space for large groups of students also needs to be addressed.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- Consideration could be given to enhancing existing efforts with an explicit, written strategic plan that highlights the peaks of excellence (discipline clusters) that have existed and are emerging. The Department is well positioned to embark on a scenario planning exercise that connects their program with local, national and international trends and needs. For example, 1) contributing to strengthening pathways from School to University for STEM knowledge; 2) becoming a national and international leader in addressing shifting demographics in society and the effects of contemporary human movements on educational systems.
- The Department has already made a significant impact in addressing the linguistic and cultural diversity this entails for local communities, the nation, Europe and internationally. There is a pressing need to integrate refugees, legal and illegal migrants in local communities (to ensure cohesive sociality) and addressing related issues - psychological, disability, language needs (multilingual, multimodal and translingual).

- There is also a need to expand course offerings to include teaching Greek as a second language and family literacy GSL. Such offerings can support community needs and in-service for those working with local communities.
- Department needs to encourage a more cohesive identity for these interrelated disciplinary clusters in order to lift their status so that it is equal to that of the STEM cluster. These efforts need to be rewarded and supported with some seed funding that would help in this endeavour thrive.
- The Department is thus encouraged to design a process for bringing the Departmental community together to reflect and refine its areas of excellence and to explain/promote the way these are assets to the university at large and the community. This could include a promotional campaign to amplify its unique leadership in the twin areas of STEM education and the study of Cultural and Linguistic Diversity.
- There is also a capacity to play a significant role in advancing higher education pedagogy with new technology. Given the shift in the affordances of new technology, all areas of the University need to recalibrate teaching and learning. This new initiative to enhance pedagogy across the UoP is currently led by a highly experienced and talented Department faculty, member. Both Departments responsible for pedagogy are uniquely suited to embrace and assist in making such a centre an excellence/success.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are:

- Principles 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are:

- Principle 2

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are:

- None

The Principles where failure of compliance was identified are:

- None

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

**The members of the Accreditation Panel for the Undergraduate Programme
Educational Science and Early Childhood Education**

University of Patras

Name and Surname	Signature
1. Prof. John Spiridakis , St. John's University, New York, USA	
2. Prof. Mary Kalantzi , University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Illinois, USA	
3. Prof. Christos Panagiotopoulos , University of Nicosia, Nicosia, Cyprus	
4. Prof. Helen Phtiaka , University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus	