ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
HELLENIC REPUBLIC

Accreditation Report
for the Undergraduate Study Programme
(Integrated Master) of:

Architecture

Institution: University of Patras
Date: 25 February 2023

Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the Undergraduate Study Programme (Integrated Master) of **Architecture** of the **University of Patras** for the purposes of granting accreditation.

Abbreviations

UPatras	University of Patras
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
EEAP	External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel
EDIP	Laboratory Teaching Staff
EER2013	External Evaluation Report of 2013
ETEP	Laboratory Technicians
HAHE	Hellenic Authority for Higher Education
HNARIC	Hellenic National Recognition and Information Centre
IQAS (ΕΣΔΠ)	Internal Quality Assurance System
ARCH/UPatras	Department of Architecture at University of Patras
MODIP	Quality Assurance Unit (ΜΟΔΙΠ)
OMEA	Internal Evaluation Groups/School's Internal Evaluation Committee
QA	Quality Assurance

TABLE OF CONTENTS

PART A: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW

I.   The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the Undergraduate Study Programme (Integrated Master) of **Architecture** of the **University of Patras** comprised the following four (4) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

1. **Professor Loukas Kalisperis (Chair)**
   Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania, USA

2. **Professor Marios C. Phocas**
   University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus

3. **Ms. Georgia Tsaftaridou**
   Department of Civil Engineering, Democritus University of Thrace
   Student Representative

4. **Mr. Dimitris Xynomilakis**
   President of ΣΑΔΑΣ-ΠΕΑ
   Representative of the Technical Chamber of Greece, Athens, Greece

II.   Review Procedure and Documentation

The **External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel (EEAP)** reviewed the material submitted by the Department of **Architecture (ARCH)** of the **University of Patras (UPatras)** in advance of its *virtual visit* (via tele-conference) and *virtual* briefing. The Director and staff of HAHE briefed the members of the EEAP on its mission and standards, as well as the guidelines for the review process and the national framework of the higher education institution in Greece. The EEAP met, in private, on Monday, February 20, 2023, to discuss the program review report for the Department of Architecture of the University of Patras, allocate tasks and list the issues for the site *virtual visit*.

The visit was conducted via online conference meetings (*Zoom*) and took place on 21, 22 of February 2023. The EEAP wrote the report in the following days (23-25 February 2023) though collaborative meetings, held via the Zoom platform. The EEAP would like to express its deep appreciation for the efforts that the Department's academic staff, administrative staff, students, alumni and HAHE took on, in order for the *virtual visit* to be a productive and effective experience. Although the EEAP was able to collect enough information for an understanding of the program, the *virtual visit* was **not as effective and rewarding** as an in-person evaluation. It is advised that HAHE resumes in-situ visits **as soon as possible**.

EEAP met initially with the **Architecture** Chair and the Vice-Rector of Academic Affairs of the **University of Patras**, on 21 February 2023, for an in-depth introductory meeting where initial presentations of the University of Patras and the Architecture Department took place. The Department's Chair and the Vice-Rector of Academic Affairs gave an overview of the University of Patras and the Department of Architecture, regarding its history, vision, mission, status, strengths, and academic profile. Further presentations provided useful information about the Department of Architecture strengths and areas of concern. The afternoon meetings continued with an in-depth presentation by representatives of the Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP) and the Internal Evaluation Group (OMEA), followed by comprehensive discussion with all MODIP & OMEA members, during which the EEAP received additional information about the program, the various activities of the Department regarding the curriculum, academic and administrative/support staff, student body, and research activities. During this meeting the EEAP was given the opportunity to ask detailed questions, in order to better facilitate the EEAP's understanding of the curriculum, internal evaluation review process, adequacy of resources and possible areas of strengths and weaknesses.

The EEAP received further documentation and supporting material related to the presentations given by MODIP & OMEA that facilitated our discussions. The meeting continued with the teaching staff members during the afternoon of 21 February 2023. During the meeting with the academic staff the EEAP was given the opportunity to ask detailed questions to better facilitate the EEAP's understanding of the curriculum, internal evaluation review process, adequacy of resources and possible areas of strengths weaknesses. Finally, the first day concluded with a teleconference of EEAP with alumni of the Department of Architecture in order to assess their experience and identify how well their studies are serving them in their current work environment. The alumni with whom we spoke, many of whom work abroad and some in academic positions in other universities, spoke highly of the value of their experience noting that in addition to architectural design the program prepared them for other design-related

career paths. The graduates of the Department of Architecture highly appreciated the close working relationship that they had with the academic staff and the pluralism that existed within the department.

At the end of the day, the EEAP reflected on the discussions and prepared for the next day's sessions of the '*virtual visit*'. The first day of the *virtual visit* was concluded with a brief meeting of the EEAP, in order to evaluate the accomplishments of the day and plan the activities and meetings of the following day.

The second day, 22 February 2023, started with a video tour and detail presentation of the facilities and a discussion followed, to address any EEAP members' questions. Following the brief virtual tour of the facilities, the *virtual visit* concluded with an extensive discussion between the EEAP and the Department's staff and academic/teaching staff, in order to further elucidate some of the concerns and points that EEAP was interested in pursuing in their subsequent discussions.

The second day of the *virtual visit*, 22 February 2023, continued with student representatives, selected by the Department. The students provided the members of the EEAP with valuable information about their study experience, curriculum, and campus facilities. They discussed their priority issues concerning student life, mobility, research, and career opportunities. The students were very hospitable, enthusiastic, and helpful. They conducted themselves admirably and were excellent ambassadors of a good educational Institution.

The EEAP continued their meetings with representatives from employers, social partners, and external stakeholders, representing very impressive professional offices and organizations, enterprises, national and local authorities. During the meetings the EEAP was able to hear their experiences either during their studies at the Department of Architecture and/or their relations with the Department, as well as aiming to address the readiness of the graduates for the market and identify areas of cooperation between the Department of Architecture and employers. All participants spoke very enthusiastically of the Department of Architecture and their affiliation with it. It was evident that the Department is held in a very high regard by its alumni and external stakeholders.

Concluding the second day meetings the EEAP met with the academic and administrative staff working on the Program Review Report, MODIP & OMEA, and the Vice-Rector, in which a quick summary of the visit was also provided. During the meeting the EEAP was able to further clarify several key points and engage in a very detailed discussion on the curriculum and facilities. The EEAP received additional information about Department of Architecture, administrative, buildings and resources, library, external relations and the electronic systems for student satisfaction and student records. Additional impromptu discussions with the Chair of OMEA and the Department of Architecture Chair took place, to clarify certain points of the very details and comprehensive presentations and request additional information, which were promptly provided. The EEAP presented to the Vice-Rector their grave concerns about the reduced number of the academic staff over the last 20 years and the need for immediate increase of the numbers of staff teaching and researching within the Department of Architecture as well as additional technical, support and administrative support. The need for additional physical facilities and laboratories was also presented to the Vice-Provost and the academic administration of the Department.

Both the current students and the alumni spoke very highly about the devotion of time and energy invested by their instructors, with them extending the teaching hours long after the official completion of the meeting period for each course, which safeguards the high level of the course quality. It is imperative that the central University administration understands the different teaching requirements that are embedded in architectural education and the increased resources that are needed in order to successfully complete an architectural education. The EEAP highly appreciates this devotion, but it notes that the low numbers of teaching staff coupled with the foreseeable *burn-out* of the current members can be detrimental in the future development of the Department.

The EEAP met via tele-conference, for the remainder of the "virtual visit", to complete the report and submit it to HAHE on Saturday, 25 February 2023.

In closing, the EEAP would like to express our sincere gratitude for the excellent support, hospitality, and openness that we encountered during our *virtual visit*.

III.   Study Programme Profile

The Department of Architecture of the **University of Patras** initiated its operation in 1999 in the frame of the ΕΠΕΑΕΚ program of the European Union. The first selection of academic staff succeeded in 2000. Since its establishment, the Department of Architecture offers a high quality, tuition-free education in Architecture to its students. The Department offers a 5-year integrated Master's undergraduate program, in which students are required to complete a total of 44 courses (9 of which are Required Design Studios) – 38 Required and 6 Required Electives – along with the completion of a Research Thesis (*Ερευνητική Εργασία*) and the Diploma Design Thesis (*Διπλωματική Εργασία*). A number of students (on average, 35-40) also complete a non-compulsory Practical Training (Internship) through the European Erasmus Placement Programs. The program of study has an equivalency of 300 ECTS. In the first three years, the curriculum ensures a solid background in architectural education, with almost all the courses offered within the curriculum are compulsory. The exceptions are the Architectural Studios 5 and 6 (3rd year) which are compulsory but optional as students select one out of the 5-7 different briefs and tutors. In the following two years of study, students may select thematic areas of individual elective courses, the Research Thesis and the Architectural Design studio in the 7, 8 and 9th semester, as well as the Diploma Design Thesis.

In principle, students do not identify any concentration areas, in which they select their courses and or complete their Diploma Design Thesis in similar thematic areas. The students' workload on the Design studios and the final Diploma Design Thesis amounts to 56 % of the overall workload required by the program of study, while a further number of courses on technology, urban design and visual arts are also studio based. In 2018, following the last revisions of the program of study made in 2014, the Department approved and implemented a revised new curriculum. The revisions made concern a slight reduction of the number of courses through merging of existing theoretical courses, as well as the introduction of new courses on sustainability and the environment, history of arts, visual arts, and theory of architecture. The revisions made aimed at an adaptation to the reduced number of faculty members and referred to the limited financial conditions of the Department, as well as the requirement for a limitation of the total duration of studies beyond the five years foreseen by the program of study. In the latest revision in 2022 the two foundations courses on Mathematics and Geometry merged. The changes of the 2022 revision aimed primarily in updating academically the curriculum and further clarify its structure and aligning with the academic and research profile of the faculty.

The Department's undergraduate curriculum is organized in 4 thematic areas (Ενότητες) that do not constitute vertical specializations but concentrate on specific scientific backgrounds, offering students a comprehensive and multifaceted design and scientific background in Architecture and design as such. The program provides a common required general education in principles of architecture and design, after which students select areas of interest and complete a small number of design studio experiences in diverse thematic areas (since there are no specializations provided by the program of study). In the 8th semester, completion of a Research Thesis is required. The Design studio in the 9th semester focuses on a special topic selected by the students and the analytical part of the Diploma Design Thesis. The 10th semester is solely devoted to the Diploma Design Project. All courses' syllabi are available for all courses

taught online on the web page of the Department. Students are given the opportunity to evaluate the courses they attend.

Graduates of the program of study obtain the title of Architectural Engineer and can become members of the Technical Chamber of Greece (TEE) after passing exams held by the Chamber. Graduates can be employed in both the private and public sector and most of the graduates have been successfully placed in both sectors after their graduation, in addition to completing post-graduate studies, either in Greece or at renowned institutions overseas. Throughout the academic year, design studio reviews, seminars and lectures are held with internationally reputable colleagues and professionals working in the field that provide additional information and exposure to different design and work environments. The Practical Training (Internship), although not compulsory is very popular, and provides graduates with an opportunity to explore job prospects, gain some work experience and make contacts. The Department supports diverse and extensive student educational experiences nationally and abroad through the University's Practical Training Program, Erasmus+ and Erasmus Placement programs (work abroad), with many students participating in these programs over the years. The academic staff of the Department is also engaged in two different post-graduate programs on Architecture and Urban Design and on Preservation of Monuments, in addition to their undergraduate program responsibilities.

There are 22 academic staff members who support the educational and research activities of the program, and some have doctoral degrees from Institutions abroad. Three (3) new faculty members have been elected or are in the process of being elected and appointed by the Ministry. There are also 10 new *Doctoral Candidates* and 2 *Temporary Term teaching staff (ΠΔ 407/80)* contributing to the teaching work of the Department. There are currently, also, eleven (11) members of Temporary Term teaching staff (5 members with ΠΔ 407/80 and 6 members with the ESPA program for academic teaching experience of young scientists holding PhD) contributing to the teaching efforts of the Department. Additionally, the Department is supported by 8 administrative staff. An issue of major concern is the reduced number of academic staff, as well as the Technical Support staff, and the inability to simultaneously replace the number of staff that have already retired or are expected to retire in short time, in order to ensure continuity of the program. Additionally, a point of concern is the disproportionally very small number of *special teaching staff members (ΕΔΙΠ)* members and the very small number of *Technical Support staff (ΕΤΕΠ)*.

The Department maintains a library with a commendable number of books and significant book donations and two laboratories with computing and automated manufacturing facilities (Fab lab), as well as three research laboratories on urban and spatial planning, and visual arts and building technologies. The laboratories are very active and available to the students at the Department. The laboratories are seriously understaffed and in need of further immediate expansion with state-of-the-art equipment (wood shop, CNC-cutter, laser cutter, etc).

The Department has a commendable number of publications and research activities, both in architectural and scientific projects. The Department was evaluated in 2013 through an External Evaluation Committee and some of the recommendations of the report that refer to the program of study have been addressed, while some of the recommendations that refer to the physical facilities of the Department have still not been addressed and should be.

The Department is considered a large academic entity in the number of students, as there are 849 registered undergraduate students (456 students currently in the first five years of study), with ratio of faculty to students of around 1 to 38. Although this ratio has improved in the last years, 1:48 in 2019, this is still less than half compared to other Architecture Departments. Also, the number of students or student teams per required studio is up to 25, which is considered very high as the average number in many European countries is 15 students in studio course. The number of academic staff is critically low proportionally to the size of the program and the diverse activities required to be followed by the faculty members and the students throughout the program.

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 realize 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 Quality Assurance Policy of the Department of Architecture of the University of Patras is coordinated with the Institution's Quality Policy. The Department's Policy is formulated and published in a prominent place on the Department's website, publicized and implemented with the participation of all interested parties. In this framework, the Department of Architecture has

instituted a quality assurance body of faculty members that is responsible for reviewing the appropriateness of the structure and organization of the curriculum and the pursuit of learning outcomes and qualifications in accordance with the European and National Framework for Higher Education Qualifications. Furthermore, internationalization issues, teaching and research activities, supporting services, students' participation in evaluation procedures and the operation of the Department, the transparency of activities and decisions, and the public presence of the program and the Department are decisive. The quality assurance body of the Department is also responsible for supporting the academic profile and orientation of the program of study, promoting its purpose and objectives, and applying appropriate quality procedures, aiming at its continuous improvement.

The structure and contents of the program of study focus on architectural project-based design, so that the students of the program become critically oriented, conceptually solid and innovative in design. In order to follow these objectives, the contents of the program are continuously updated in responding to contemporary international issues of architecture, while high-level architectural education is aspired to be provided by the faculty, while also linking research and teaching. As the Department of Architecture states, "its mission is in the cultivation and promotion of the science of the Architect-Engineer, especially in the fields of architectural design, building technology, urban and spatial planning, the functional and aesthetic design of interior spaces and buildings, and the training of scientists capable of studying and researching the issues related to the above areas".

In achieving these goals, individual synergies in teaching and research and an independence of knowledge and provision of skills are available throughout the educational program. The curriculum is primarily design-based, whereas the design studios are specific in their individual thematic and individual courses on construction, sustainability, urban design, and visual arts are also design-based in different environments and scales of development. Further potentialities emerge in view of application of new technological and environmental aspects of the profession within the design process, as well as the practice of a comprehensive design through the interdisciplinary nature of design-driven research. In this frame, the Department seems to rather follow a traditional design process methodology rather than this being enriched through inter- and cross-disciplinarity by the advisors and students involved.

The quality assurance body monitors the operation of the program on a regular basis. Revisions in the program of study were made in the academic year 2018-19, and in 2022 to further improve the profile of the program of study and adjust the number of individual courses offered within and the students' workload. The revisions made were in compliance with the reduced number of faculty members at the Department, the limited financial recourses, as well as the extended duration of study followed by the students. In the latest revision (2022), a number of courses have been merged and others were introduced on sustainability and the environment, history of arts, visual arts, and theory of architecture. The Department of Architecture is fully compliant with the European and the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education in terms of learning outcomes and qualifications.

The academic staff is highly qualified with high-level design and scientific achievements and international recognition, devoted to the mission of the program and motivated. There is also a very good and productive collaboration and teamwork that ensures among the tutors and the

students, despite the very low teaching staff/student ratio, a very good result in terms of quality of the Department's alumni. The EEAP finds that there is a highly committed faculty. The faculty is highly respected by the students and individual faculty members often act as role-models to the students. Nevertheless, lack of critical physical facilities and the partly remote residence of many faculty members as to the location of the Department do not support the development of a strong sense of community among the faculty members as such and their involvement in interdisciplinary activities within the University in teaching and research. This fact acts disadvantageously in achieving a unique profile of the Department, and in preserving the high level of teaching, as well as the advancement of collaborative and interdisciplinary research activities by the faculty members.

The Department of Architecture accords importance to linking teaching to design rather than collaborative and experimental research as such. This has resulted in commendable results in terms of visibility, individual international design acknowledgements and collaborations, alumni placement and important service to the society and profession. Thus, research output, mainly in terms of design research, is directly associated with the specific conditions of the Department of Architecture (small number of staff, nature of output often suitable for exhibitions/built projects, rather than scientific publications). At this point it should be stated that individual faculty members do have commendable achievements in scientific research as well. The Department has its own database, as well as relying on the services of the Research Committee of the University of Patras. The evaluation criteria for promotion of the faculty members are extended and adapted to include accomplishments in multifaceted creative activities beyond research and measures of public recognition of creative work in architecture. Furthermore, the international network of the faculty members succeeded in an excellent record of alumni placements in the labour market, in Greece and abroad, as well as at renowned Institutions abroad for post-graduate study and doctoral research. The internationalization of the program through participation in Erasmus+, European networks of education and research, organization of international lecture series and exhibitions are noted.

The quality of the support services was considered satisfactory by the academic staff and students although it is strongly influenced by the extremely reduced number of administrative staff; this increases the everyday difficulties and limitations inherent in the Department's size. An immediate increase of the administrative personnel and lab assistants is imperative. A strategic planning of the lab infrastructure of the Department through the development of research labs and redefinition of related research activities within, will act positively on the further development of the Department. The structure of the Department, the program of study and the teaching and research activities by the faculty are well documented on the web sites of the Department.

In conclusion, the Department's QA policy is fully compliant with the HAHE policy and guidelines and also the EU QA standards on Higher Education. Its curriculum has a high-level profile by promoting the practice of architectural design at different levels and scales of investigation, while also providing solid knowledge and skills in architecture. Nevertheless, due to economic constraints, the Department still lacks critical physical facilities for the academic staff and the students and there is very limited financial support by the University or the government for the Department's operation and the faculty's research activities, affecting its operation in teaching, research, and the development of a community of space for Architecture within the University.

The EEAP is not aware of a formal mechanism for renewal and development of the faculty body through hiring new colleagues or external collaborators, or ΕΔΙΠ and ΕΤΕΠ staff.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R1.1 The EEAP recommends a review of the Department of Architecture identity, vision and goals, through an independent advisory board, ad-hoc expert panels and/or a dedicated international workshop. Annual internal reviews need to be further institutionalized by the Department, as well as external evaluations, organized by the Department itself every four years. This will help to constantly revise and further promote the profile and mission of the Department, as well as to set up long-term development aims and policies at multiple levels of operation.

R1.2 The program of study needs to be further enriched in the Design studio by comprehensive architectural design activities promoting aspects of collaboration, inter- and cross-disciplinarity among the faculty and the students.

R1.3 The updating of the curriculum and the program should be perceived as a continuous and dynamic internal evaluation process that involves a number of constituents including faculty, students, alumni, and external partners. This committee should include, in an advisory capacity all stakeholders, and should have a tight time schedule of meetings and consultations with the aim of a comprehensive proposal to be discussed and approved by the faculty. The central administration should facilitate such endeavours.

Principle 2: Design and Approval of Programmes

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

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

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

The Department of Architecture of the University of Patras initiated its operation in 1999 in the frame of the ΕΠΕΑΕΚ program of the European Union. The most recent external evaluation of the program of study took place in 2013. The latest major revisions of the program by the faculty took place in 2018 and 2022. The revisions made aimed at an adaptation to the reduced number of faculty members, and referred to the limited financial conditions, as well as the requirement of limitation of the total duration of studies beyond the five years foreseen by the program of study. The program of study also includes an integrated Master's degree within the 5-year Diploma. The program is approved at European Union level as to the 11 points of reference of the EU directive 2005/36/EC article 46.

The program's specific contents, objectives and aims comply with the academic and scientific guidelines set by the University. The program focuses on architectural project-based design and promotes conceptual composition, technical excellence, and contemporary critical considerations. In this framework, architectural education covers all areas of scientific knowledge at various scales, and it cultivates the design process. Furthermore, a range of related subjects in visual arts, theory, history, technology, and sciences is covered that support

the provision of theoretical background, cultivation of research and their integration within the design process at different scales and levels of complexity. In achieving this, the program of study is structured in four thematic areas of courses, according to their content and topics: courses on design, history and theory, visual arts and visual communication, technology, and sustainability.

The four thematic areas of the Department concentrate on the specific scientific backgrounds, offering students a comprehensive and multifaceted design and scientific background in Architecture and design as such. Their integration within the core area of the design is achieved successfully. In the first three years, the program of study ensures a solid background in architectural education with almost all courses offered within being compulsory —the exceptions being the Architectural Design 5 and 6 which are optional studios. In the following two years of study, students may select thematic areas through individual elective courses, the Research Thesis and the Architectural Design studio in the 7, 8 and 9th semester, as well as the Diploma Design Thesis. Overall, the program of study is based on sequences of prerequisite courses. Through progression of semesters, the design complexity and depth (from the scale of the building and the object to the scale of the city) increase gradually. In principle, students do not identify any concentration areas, in which they select their courses and or complete their Diploma Design Thesis in similar thematic areas. At the same time, the last stage of studies acts as integral component of the 5-year program of study, and is clearly formulated with regard to the integrated Master's component.

The quality assurance body and the faculty as a whole support the identity of the program as formulated above. The EEAP believes that this identity is clearly reflected in the structure of the program of study and the students work produced in the Design studios and Diploma Design Theses. Presently, the sequence of the main courses in architectural design is clearly defined regarding the contents, levels of advancement and pedagogical objectives. The individual courses in each semester act synergistically to their design-based nature. In addition, the practical internship, although it does not count within the required 300 ECTS to complete the program of study, is considered to be of significance for the acquisition of practical experience and technical knowledge. Further improvements for the program of study refer to the need to introduce a comprehensive design studio in the last semesters of the core program of study that will integrate various disciplines within the design process and enhance experimentation and collaborative design activities through contemporary technological means. This will further lead to an increase of design-driven research activities and new technologies towards enhanced sustainability of the built environment in the last four semesters of the curriculum. In addition, stronger synergies in teaching and research and independence of knowledge and skills' provision can be achieved in the last year of the program of study, provided that the Research Thesis is placed within the 9th Semester and is directly associated to the thematic of the Diploma Design Thesis, and the design component of the latter has a duration of two semesters. This will additionally enhance concentration of studies in the last part of the program of study, the design-driven research component in the Diploma Design Thesis, and it will ameliorate the feasible duration for the development and successful completion of the Diploma Design Thesis by the students.

The program reflects the interests and specializations of the faculty. Most of the faculty have a strong design profile, while some of the faculty also have an area of specialization. A

commendable output of research, creative practice and teaching is demonstrated. In all cases, the faculty should be commended for addressing the high number of the student body at a time of limited financial recourses, reduced number of academic positions by preserving through personal efforts a program's organization that still corresponds to a much higher number of faculty members and a demanding profile of high-level acknowledgeable design results and individual applied research activities. An expansion of the number faculty is imperative. The low faculty/student ratio of approximately 1:38 impacts the quality of education. The increase should be accomplished through the hiring of new permanent faculty members, as well as adjunct and visiting faculty. The announcement of new positions (in addition to the presently announced or allocated ones) in the next few years should primarily address new technological and interdisciplinary areas of design-based research and teaching, rather than traditional ones. The expansion of the faculty will contribute to the future development and sustainability of the program and can be a mechanism to forge the emerging identity of the Department's program in design.

The library and the laboratories in the Department provide support of the educational activities, the execution of research projects, and a strong potential for interdisciplinary research activities. While the library of the Department has a commendable number of books, the laboratories are certainly seriously understaffed and in need of further immediate expansion with state-of-the-art equipment (wood shop, CNC-cutter, laser cutter, etc). The hands-on experience in model making is equally acknowledged in architectural education by the faculty with the automated fabrication of models and prototypes. Lack of research infrastructure and equipment, as well as an extremely low number of administrative staff in charge, limits the research potentials of the Department and increases the everyday difficulties and limitations for the faculty and the students. An immediate acquisition of lab facilities and increase of the administrative personnel and lab assistants is imperative. A strategic planning of the required lab infrastructure of the Department will act positively on the further development of the Department.

The Department delivers on the stated intention of creating a solid educational program and providing its graduates design specific and scientific skills within the multidisciplinary nature of architecture, while also enabling research and practice of the profession within renowned international circles in academia and practice. The course syllabi support this direction through both project and bibliography. The alumni with whom we spoke, many of whom work abroad in internationally renowned practices and have significant activities in practice and research since graduation, spoke highly of the value of their experience noting that the program prepared them to be internationally competitive possessing highly valued knowledge and design skills in traditional and new environments along with the profession's evolution.

There are procedures and regulations for the revisions of the program, and the EAAP was made aware that the program has been internally monitored and assessed periodically. External consultations and collaborative activities with international faculty, advisors and collaborators are held periodically. The student representatives are involved and included in the Department's meetings on a non-regular basis. Even though, the students contribute critically to curriculum revisions through one-to-one discussions with the faculty. We would encourage further use of virtual platforms/social media to enhance student participation and engagement.

The student guide is complete and appropriate. The Department's web site is updated and well-structured with regard to the courses' syllabi, the academic personnel information, research and networking activities of the Department. A placement of design studio work and the final Diploma Design Theses on a prominent location on the Department's web site would definitely further enhance the visibility and quality of the work accomplished at the Department throughout all stages of the program of study. This will allow the students and other stakeholders to access efficiently both, the academic and non-academic resources of the program and the University.

Panel Judgement

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

The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel agrees that this Programme leads to a Level 7 Qualification according to the National & European Qualifications Network (Integrated Master)	YES	NO*
	X	

Panel Recommendations

R2.1 The updating of the curriculum should be perceived as a continuous and dynamic process that involves several entities including faculty, students, and external participants. The internal evaluation committee (OMEA) should include, in an advisory capacity all stakeholders, and should have a regular time schedule of meetings and consultations with the aim of continuous related improvements to be discussed and approved by the faculty. The central administration should facilitate such endeavours.

R2.2 The program of study needs to be further improved through introduction of a comprehensive design studio in the last semesters of the core program of study. This will integrate various disciplines within the design process and enhance experimentation and collaborative design activities through contemporary technological means.

R2.3 An advanced component and the possibility of concentration of the students' education in the final year should be further provided. The interdependence of the 9th semester courses, especially of the Research Thesis (*Ερευνητική Εργασία*) with the Design Diploma Thesis (*Διπλωματική Εργασία*) and a two-semester duration of the design component of the latter is expected to act positively on the achievement of a research by design process development and the completion of studies by the end of the 10th semester.

R2.4 Student work from design studios and the final Diploma Design Theses should be located in a prominent position on the Department's web site, in order to further enhance the visibility and quality of the work accomplished at the Department throughout all stages of the program of study. This will allow the students and other stakeholders to access efficiently both, the academic and non-academic resources of the program and the University.

R2.5 A strategic planning of the Department's lab infrastructure, through acquisition of lab facilities and increase of the administrative personnel and lab assistants will have a positive effect on the further development of the Department.

Principle 3: Student-centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment

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

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

The student-centred learning and teaching process

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

The program curriculum of the Department of Architecture is articulated in 10 semesters, integrating a Master's Degree within a 5-year Diploma (300 ECTS). The program consists of lecture courses and different types of design studios (extended, introductory, specialized, experimental and intensive).

Since the last external evaluation (2013), twice a new curriculum has been implemented to integrate new theoretical and practical issues, the era of globalization, new technologies and environmental requirements. This program has been updated following an internal evaluation in 2018. The current program has a comprehensive structure, crossing the progressiveness of

the various disciplines and design practices from one semester to another in a vertical structure, with the themes of the departments. Interdisciplinarity is somewhat emphasized within semesters 1 through 7 of the Design Studios although theoretical and design-based individual courses ensure the autonomy of the various disciplines: history and theory, construction and technology, arts and techniques. The courses of the first three years make up the core curriculum, after which students can choose among Required Electives or Electives courses. Experimentation is promoted in semesters 8 and 9 and personal research takes place through the semester 8 Research Thesis and the semester 9 and 10 Design Diploma Thesis, for which the topics are freely chosen by the student. Students select a professor or a team of professors as supervisor(s) and decide together the frequency of follow-up meetings. The Design Diploma Thesis is presented publicly to a jury, plus the supervisor, who assign the grade. The Design Diploma Thesis defence sessions are highlighted events of exchange for the whole community of students and teachers. The practical training is not compulsory, but it is motivated by public funding (ΕΣΠΑ) and is integrated to the curriculum (6 ETCS). A large number of students take advantage of the practical training opportunities and the employers with whom the EEAP had a discussion spoke very highly and enthusiastically of the experiences they had with the students of the Department.

A student survey system exists, and students can evaluate the quality of courses through questionnaires online. The participation is low, which is quite similar to other faculties in Greece and overseas.

By crossing the theories and practices of the project with the contribution of various disciplines, the program covers all ranges from the micro-scale of an object to the macro-scale of a territory and introduces the students to different design fields. It is thus a complex program that prepares students for various professional practices while stimulating their motivation, self-reflection and engagement in the learning process.

The Department promotes international collaborations. A significant number of students go abroad in the context of *Erasmus+* Exchange European Program (around 2.4 – 5.0 % of the student body per year) or for a practical training, and a significant number of graduates go abroad either for postgraduate studies or to work in very well-known architecture offices.

Despite the large number of students entering the program and the reduced numbers of the teaching force, the professor-student relationships are still very interpersonal. Students and former graduates emphasized the great investment of their professors and the close exchange with them, which continues quite frequently even after the end of their studies, expressing a sense of belonging to a community.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R3.1 The EEAP recommends the urgent increase in teaching staff, which will provide for significantly better results overall.

R3.2 The teaching personnel could favour the new option, provided within the existing policy, of requesting the students fill the survey during the course, while in class, to boost participation.

R3.3 The students' work is digitized but is not yet online. This obstacle must be overcome to highlight the Department's production and demonstrate the plurality and diversity of design research and practice. The excellent Digital Archives and presentation prepared by the Department for the 20th year anniversary should be made publicly available.

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 of Architecture, accepts a small number of students (72 in 2022) and provides a friendly and welcoming atmosphere to every young student. An effort is made to create a community, composed not only from the faculty working with the freshmen, but also with all undergraduates in all years. This effort facilitates the transition from high school, and at the same time, in combination with the program's structure and demands, encourages the young students to improve their cooperation abilities, their interests and their perception of Architecture. Due to the close relationship that the faculty has with the students, the progress of every student is monitored.

The Department tries to create opportunities for the students to broaden their fields of interest, by reaching out to the other Departments within the School of Engineering and the University of Patras. The students are encouraged to increase collaborations and learning experiences with other educational fields. In this framework, the Free Elective (EU) courses that the students can select from other Departments of the University, presently with a workload of 2 ECTS, should be equated with the Elective Courses (ME) offered by the Department that correspond to a work load of 4 ECTS. In this way, the attractiveness of these courses for the students of the Department and related educational synergies between the Departments of the University of Patras will be strengthened.

The EEAP notes that lectures with invited external speakers and seminars are frequently organized, in order to provide as many architectural experiences as possible.

Although Practical Training accumulates ECTS units, it does not count as part of the required 300 ECTS for graduation. Also, since no internship is required after graduation, before acquiring professional rights, the practical experience acquired during the studies is the only opportunity

for the students to make a contact with the professional field that is organized and supervised by the University In addition, the provision of knowledge and basic skills required in practice of the profession, should be also strengthened in the context of the courses of the program of study.

A Diploma Supplement is foreseen for graduates of the Department of Architecture in application of the general policies of the University of Patras.

The Department of Architecture encourages student mobility and promotes international collaborations. All students who have completed the first two years of the curriculum are eligible to participate in the Erasmus Exchange Program. The student mobility in the framework of Erasmus is constantly increasing, not only for studying abroad, but also for practical training in architectural offices abroad. The Department of Architecture had most of the Erasmus+ practical training applications among the University of Patras. It is worth noting that a very significant number of graduates go abroad either for postgraduate studies or to work in well-known architecture offices.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R4.1. The collaboration with the other Departments in the School of Engineering and the University of Patras is encouraged.

R4.2. The EEAP appreciates the efforts of the faculty to connect with Universities and Academics within the European Union and the United States and expects the University to provide all the necessary resources and support to facilitate this practice.

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 comprises a significant number of high-quality teaching staff with varied profiles (architecture, art, digital media, engineering, and history). Their activities and publications are well presented at the Department's website. Additionally, the Department engages very important architectural educators and practitioners to fulfil the teaching needs of the Department on an *ad-hoc* basis, especially in the post-graduate programs.

The Department has 22 faculty members (10 Professors, 4 Associate Professors, 2 Tenured Assistant Professors, and 6 Non-Tenured Assistant Professors) and 1 newly appointed special staff member (ΕΔΙΠ). Additionally, there are 2 pending positions, 6 positions for administrative staff, 2 positions for librarians and 2 ΕΤΕΠ. Recruitments and promotions of the academic staff follow the criteria and the procedures established by the Greek Ministry and appropriate legislation. Currently, the renewal of the faculty is very slow. The EEAP is also concerned with the proportionally large number of newly hired teaching staff members.

As the 2013 evaluation committee of the Department stated, the Department had and still has a shortage of teaching staff and in technical support members for the different laboratories and workshops. The need of a renewal in the members of the teaching staff can be identified by the low ratio of faculty to students (1:38). The number of high-ranking faculty positions is disproportionate, creating a "top heavy" department. The members of the teaching staff make enormous efforts to cover the lack of the teaching staff by being overloaded with extra hours in teaching and participating in administrative work, committees, etc. Especially relevant is the large number of Diploma Design Theses and Research Theses of the students assigned to each of the teaching staff, considering that students do not complete their work in the assigned

semester. This faculty/student ratio is considered very low as the average ratio in many European countries may be one teaching staff per 15 to 18 students in studio courses.

Both the current students and the alumni spoke very highly about the devotion of time and energy invested by their instructors, who extend teaching hours long after the official completion of the meeting period for each course, which safeguards the high level of the course quality. It is imperative that the central University administration understands the different teaching requirements that are embedded in architectural education and the increased resources that are needed in order to successfully complete an architectural education. The EEAP highly appreciates this devotion, but it notes that this can be detrimental in the development of the research, which will further help in the definition of the Department's identity.

The Department promotes faculty mobility. The teaching staff has the opportunity for a sabbatical leave every three years or a leave to teach at other institutions via Erasmus+ for limited periods of 1-2 weeks. Unfortunately, and due to the issue of the understaffing of the Department, teaching staff do not have the opportunity of sabbatical or Erasmus leaves as often as it is allowed.

The EEAP was informed, during the virtual site visit presentations of the efforts that the Department has undertaken to finalize selection of a candidate for the new position in Sustainable Architecture and the establishment of the process for the replacement of a faculty member in History and Theory of Architecture.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R5.1 The EEAP, considering the shortage in the number of the teaching staff, and understanding the issue of the peripheral location of Patras, encourages the Department to pursue additional hiring and to seek incentives in order to attract potential faculty members that will remain there.

R5.2 The EEAP suggests that the University must provide the resources for new faculty to fill the required areas of interest and research. It is imperative that the central administration understands the nature of the architectural education.

R5.3 The EEAP encourages the Department to further promote and make visible the evolving diversity of the research and areas of the interest within the Department. At the same time, it is advisable to further link and embed the research areas within the curriculum and explore ways of making available the excellent Digital Archives to the public.

R5.4 In addition, the EEAP encourages the faculty to maintain and strengthen the mechanism of reaching out and creating more and stronger local and international collaborations.

R5.5 The EEAP recommends that the faculty members strengthen the research-teaching nexus in the undergraduate program, while more members of the staff should become involved into the research labs.

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-centered learning and the adoption of flexible modes of learning and teaching. Support activities and facilities may be organized 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 of Architecture faces a crucial problem of resources. The faculty and staff as well as the students of the Department of Architecture must be praised for their resilience and commitment. They have managed to maintain the quality and momentum of the program and its environment provided, both human and physical, in remarkably good order despite financial and other adversities. Presently, the Department is accommodated within four different building sections. As a result, the Department has made strong efforts to convert the spaces provided and to facilitate the requirements of the architecture teaching process, by organizing classrooms, studios, lecture spaces, the library and labs to the best possible way. This effort would have been even more successful and productive, if the department administration had full control to expand to accommodate additional needs, such as laboratories, exhibition spaces, offices for the faculty members and support offices, among others. The existing facilities are rationally organized, but insufficient in terms of the premises location and size.

The renewal and expansion of the support infrastructure, laboratory facilities and technology should be addressed urgently. The EEAP understands that the Department depends in this respect on the institutional context, University and Ministry. Furthermore, we encourage the Department to consider seeking external funding as a priority, at the same time as it advocates for additional funding from the University and the State. This outreach activity should be coordinated with the institution and the Department's strategic plan. It should be targeted and based on reasonable financial estimates.

The Department is commended for prioritizing the acquisition for resources and equipment, which will guarantee much needed laboratories of automated fabrication, visual media and construction for both teaching and research. The installation of a wood shop that should be supported with the appropriate support staff (ΕΤΕΠ) is of upmost necessity.

Information about supporting infrastructures, provided from the Student Welfare Directorate, is available through the University of Patras' website and the Secretariat of the Department of Architecture.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R6.1. The EEAP recommends that the University of Patras' central administration and Government provide the necessary funding for additional spaces (appropriate environment to work for students and staff), required by the Department, to be utilized by the staff and students for accessibility and safety.

R6.2. The EEAP strongly recommends that the Department and the University explore several schemes that would allow for the unification of the physical infrastructure of the Department on the existing campus. This would allow both faculty and students to work within an environment that supports and encourages collaboration and synergy for a strong community. Such an environment will further accommodate the collaboration between the central core with all satellite entities within the campus and the city of Patras.

R6.3. The EEAP encourages the Department, as part of its outreach program, to explore existing opportunities and pursue new agreements with software companies, so that the students are further supported in their design work. It is encouraging that efforts have been made to centralize and automate distribution of software licenses by the University.

R6.4. A wood shop, supported with the appropriate support staff (ΕΤΕΠ), is of upmost necessity.

R6.5. The EEAP strongly recommends that the University supports the development of the lab infrastructure and the promotion of research work. A more appealing and complete infrastructure environment is significant for the operation of the undergraduate program. This could also motivate doctoral candidates to choose the Department for their research.

Principle 7: Information Management

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

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

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

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

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

The Department has established various monitoring procedures and collects data on the student population, performance indicators, teaching staff and the study program. With this information the Department is able to identify weak areas in order to improve the study program.

Students have individual access in the institute's online platforms. They can track their progress online and request basic certificates.

Course feedback is collected at the end of each semester through a questionnaire that assesses the teaching staff, their teaching methodology and materials used, their effort and the level of course difficulty. These are conducted online and analysed by the MODIP and then the teaching staff can access the results for their course. It was mentioned that a small percentage of the student body participates. This was mainly attributed to the fact that the evaluations are completed outside of the classroom and, as such, most students disregard them. However, the teaching staff stated that the students are comfortable enough to address their concerns and criticism directly to them.

The Department recently digitized their archive from the past 20 years. The EEAP was presented data in graphs regarding the students and their profile through the years, the career paths of

the graduates and their current location, the number of faculty members and teaching staff, the modifications of the undergraduate and postgraduate programs and their projects. It was also mentioned that the Department plans to organize an alumni group and collect further information regarding the graduates.

In the Department's annual review, which is mandatory by MODIP, all the available data are taken into consideration and contribute to the continuous improvement. The annual internal evaluation is available on MODIP's website and accessible to the public.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R7.1 Improve participation rates in course evaluation surveys by conducting them in the classroom during lecture times.

R7.2 The Department should establish its own key performance indicators that include quantitative and qualitative indicators, in order to track its progress efficiently.

Principle 8: Public Information

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

Information on Institution's activities is useful for prospective and current students, graduates, other stakeholders and the public.

Therefore, institutions and their academic units provide information about their activities, including the programmes they offer, the intended learning outcomes, the qualifications awarded, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, the pass rates and the learning opportunities available to their students, as well as graduate employment information.

Study Programme Compliance

The Department's website (www.arch.upatras.gr) is detailed and well indexed. Information regarding the staff members, curriculum, research programs, the policy for quality assurance and the facilities are provided both in English and Greek.

The website is accessible for all relevant information. A detailed curriculum plan, the course outlines, the staff's CV and projects, research, a google form for every alumni to fill in and a well-structured student's guide are available. Contact details and online comprehensive maps are also available from the website's menu. News and announcements are updated daily, providing current information to the students. The English version of the website is comprehensive and makes available all the information needed.

The Facebook page is regularly updated and offers public information with regard to academic conferences and activities.

Recent online lectures are available on the Department's Facebook page while older lectures are on the Department's YouTube page, but the uploads are not all up to date.

The students publish an annual journal of their activities and work accomplishments.

Overall, the Department's information is published in a timely manner and should continue to be renewed.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R8.1   Publish the 20-year archive to give more insight into the Department's outcomes.

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 Quality Assurance Policy of the Department is aligned with MODIP and is developed and applied with the participation of all its staff: teaching, technical and administrative. The OMEA performs an annual internal evaluation of the quality of the program and submits a written report containing its findings to MODIP.

The annual evaluation report contains all the information necessary for the Department to assess the academic quality of the program, to identify its strong points and weaknesses, and to take measures for its improvement. The most recent review has identified a set of strengths and weaknesses of the Department along with a list of suggested proactive actions. The strengths include a high quality and carefully selected staff, a highly educated student body and the formation of a modern program that can be easily adjusted. The weaknesses include (1) the lack of infrastructures, (2) the large number of students registered in the undergraduate program vis-à-vis faculty, resulting in a detrimentally low teacher to student ratio and (3) the lack of financial aid from the government.

At the end of every semester, students are asked to participate in a questionnaire, monitoring their satisfaction with the courses. Although the number of students that responds is fairly low, it enables the teaching staff to self-evaluate and improve their teaching methods and outcomes.

The annual internal reviews are used for the continuous improvement of the study program and the delivery of a quality, up-to-date curriculum. It also serves for the improvement of staff,

resources, facilities, work environment and administrative process in support of the educational activities. The written report is submitted to MODIP and they publish it to their website.

The Department is committed to provide high quality education and experience to the student body and staff, while maintaining a positive and friendly environment.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R9.1 The Department should further engage in a formal and consistent evaluation process of the program of studies and activities. Additionally, strengthening of the research activities of the faculty and related synergistic actions with students, in order to engage them further in the latest research trends and changing needs of the society, should be included as compelling components for the future development of the Department.

R9.2 The Department should consider, as part of its programmatic evaluation, the trends of emerging inter- and cross-disciplinary research and practice in architecture in strategically addressing future faculty hires. The EEAP is concerned that the Department's faculty members and administrative personnel are overextended in teaching and multiple administrative duties.

Principle 10: Regular External Evaluation of Undergraduate Programmes

PROGRAMMES SHOULD REGULARLY UNDERGO EVALUATION BY COMMITTEES OF EXTERNAL EXPERTS SET BY HAHE, AIMING AT ACCREDITATION. 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 committee of independent experts. HAHE grants accreditation of programmes, with a specific term of validity, following to which revision is required. The accreditation of the quality of the programmes acts as a means of verification of the compliance of the programme with the template's requirements, and as a catalyst for improvement, while opening new perspectives towards the international standing of the awarded degrees.

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

The Department was evaluated in 2013 by an international external evaluation committee. At that time, the Department was in the process of completing the revised program of studies, which was implemented in the following academic years. As the Department states, part of the external evaluation of 2013, was considered in the final formulation of the revised program of studies, but also in the update that followed in 2018. The revisions made referred to a complete restructuring of the curriculum based on a reduction of courses, and the redefinition of architectural design courses in each semester to directly relate with individual thematises and scales, design-based and theoretical research from the subject areas defined within the units of the Department.

The EEAP recommends continuous review of the curriculum of the Department, to address contemporary issues of the society and the profession, to enhance its emerging identity and to maintain the future development and sustainability of the program, given the number of faculty members. The different thematic areas of the Department should account for the broader contemporary context of the discipline, with reference to theory, communication media, social and environmental sustainability, digital computation and fabrication, technology design, inter- and cross-disciplinary design-based research. The required expansion of faculty through the announcement of new positions (in addition to the allocated ones) in the next few years should address such cross-disciplinary areas of design-based research and teaching, rather than the traditional ones.

The external review of 2013 strongly identified issues with the physical infrastructure, laboratories, and workshops. The EEAP is also concerned with the efficiency of the teaching spaces and the lack of support for the upgrade and maintenance of current facilities, which was

strongly stated in the 2013 EEC report, The EEAP is very concerned about national budget practices that have had substantial detrimental effect on key infrastructure elements such as the computer laboratory, fabrication facilities and general facilities and equipment. Such budget shortfalls threaten even the most basic ability to conduct coursework. The continuation of these practices such as a woefully inadequate, zero-budget, allocation for acquisitions and updates of software and hardware in the information technology areas and important facilities management threatens the very essence of a university. Although, the University has allocated additional and substantial space to the Department, the physical separation of the building units will pose a hindrance to the collegiality and exchange of ideas among faculty and primarily students.

The EEAP is concerned about the currently low number of faculty, high teaching load of the faculty members and low ratio of faculty members to students. The negative implications of a heavy teaching load in conducting research by the faculty are evident and has become increasingly critical for the future development and sustainability of the program. The EEAP is also concerned with the efficiency of the teaching spaces and the lack of state financial support.

There have been no other evaluation efforts outside of the single review sponsored by HAHE. However, the Department implements the procedures set forth by the University Quality Assurance Unit, collects and analyses the required data periodically, and provides their results to the QAU.

All faculty and staff recognize the importance of the external evaluation and value the past and future recommendations. They all believe this helps the Department achieve its goals and purpose, help them improve, and engage in meaningful discussions about the future of the program and the changing educational demands placed by a diverse set of social and professional issues. Unfortunately, the Department does not have the financial means to implement its own external evaluation process. A possible solution might be the establishment of an advisory professional board whose members volunteer their services for the benefit of the Department.

The EEAP had the opportunity to interact not only with almost all faculty and staff members, but also with current students of the Department, as well as graduates. All showed a great level of enthusiasm and professionalism, as well as commitment in supporting and aiding the EEAP in any manner and for any request. The administration, faculty and staff of the Department were very eager in accommodating the needs and requests of the EEAP, which was made to feel very welcomed. The slightly negative current comments presented in this Principle could be ameliorated by implementing the suggested recommendations by the external reviews.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R10.1 The Department should continuously review the curriculum and staffing needs, to address contemporary issues of the society and the profession, enhance its emerging identity and maintain the future development and sustainability of the program.

R10.2 The stated goal of the production of high-quality research activity by the faculty members of the Department should be expanded to include cross- and inter-disciplinary research and greater collaboration among teaching staff in research projects.

R10.3 The University and the Ministry of Education should provide the Department with additional faculty positions and building resources.

R10.4 The Department should implement its own external evaluation process. A possible solution might be the establishment of an advisory professional board whose members volunteer their services for the benefit of the Department. Such a board should take advantage of the highly placed alumni of the Department within the professional offices worldwide.

R10.5 The Department should continue its efforts to fully respond to the comments and recommendations provided in the External Evaluation Committee report of 2013, some of which are present in this report as well.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

- High quality of educational processes and curriculum, following the best contemporary practices.
- Excellent collaboration between teaching staff, administrators, and students.
- The preparation that the program affords for their alumni, which manifest itself in excellent and remarkable professional careers.
- Good balance between academic research, publications, exhibitions, and field applications.
- Strong interaction with partners, both in the public and private sectors.
- Excellent repository of student/faculty work which was produced for the 20th anniversary of the Department as *Anniversary Project Archive*

II. Areas of Weakness

- The number of teaching staff is **low** especially in relation to the broad academic goals of the Department.
- **Low** ratio of academic staff to students.
- Existing infrastructure needs updating and improvement. Laboratories and workshop infrastructure is not adequate.
- Lack of collaborative and interdisciplinary research activities.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- The central administration of the University of Patras and the Ministry of Education **must increase** the numbers of the academic staff.
- **Improve** the student - teaching staff ratio.
- **Evaluate** the curriculum to accommodate a comprehensive design studio.
- **Rethink** the separation of the Research Thesis and the Diploma Design Thesis.
- **Improve** physical infrastructure and collaborative working spaces for the Department. Laboratories and workshop infrastructure need to be immediately expanded. The EEAP considers this a critical issue.
- **Establish** a local *Liaison Office* (Γραφείο Διασύνδεσης), enhance the role of the alumni, and further improve their tracking.
- **Enhance** use of the Public Information outlets and social media to promote the Architecture Department's contribution, by making the *Anniversary Project Archives* public.
- **Provide** opportunities for further faculty development.

I. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: **1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, and 10.**

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **6.**

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	

	YES	NO
The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel agrees that this Programme leads to a Level 7 Qualification according to the National & European Qualifications Network (Integrated Master)	**X**	

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname   **Signature**

1. **Professor Loukas Kalisperis (Chair)**
   Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania, USA

2. **Professor Marios C. Phocas**
   University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus

3. **Ms. Georgia Tsaftaridou**
   Department of Civil Engineering, Democritus University of Thrace
   Student Representative

4. **Mr. Dimitris Xynomilakis**
   President of ΣΑΔΑΣ-ΠΕΑ
   Representative of the Technical Chamber of Greece, Athens, Greece