ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
HELLENIC REPUBLIC

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

Management Science & Technology
Institution: University of Patras
Date: 9 July 2022

Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the New Undergraduate Study Programme in operation of **Management Science and Technology** of the **University of Patras** for the purposes of granting accreditation

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 new undergraduate study programme in operation of Management Science and Technology 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 Spyros Economides (Chair)**
       California State University, East Bay, USA

2.   **Professor Emeritus Nicolas Spyratos**
       University of Paris-Saclay, France

3.   **Professor Costas Iliopoulos**
       King's College London, UK

4.   **Ms Despina Liotsaki**
       Athens University of Economics and Business

II.   Review Procedure and Documentation

The following meetings were conducted on the 4th of July, 2022 between the EEAP members and University of Patras Administrative personnel and Department of Management Science and Technology ("The Department") Academic personnel related to the External Evaluation and Accreditation process for the Department.

Teleconference with the Vice-Rector/President of MODIP and the head of the Department

Participants:

- EEAP members
- The Dean of the School of Economics and Business, Professor Vasilios Voutsinas, representing the Vice Rector Professor Dionisios Mantzavinos
- The Head of the Department, Professor Vassilios Vassiliadis

Professor Voutsinas started the meeting by giving a brief overview of the University profile in terms of its academic structure into various Schools, its major infrastructure facilities, its administrative organization, the post graduate programs and its commitment to quality assurance practices dating much prior to 2015 when the first external evaluation of the institution was conducted.

The head of the Department, Professor Vassilis Vassiliadis followed with an informative presentation of the Department which was created in 2019, prompted by the mandate of the legislature for the University to absorb undergraduate study programs of regional Technological Educational Institutions (TEI). Thus, within the School of Economics and Business the newly established Department, by absorbing the computer science program curricula of the merging TEI and combining them with the disciplines of Business Administration and Economics, enhanced these disciplines by adding a technological dimension that serves the quantitative analysis aspects of decision making. He also gave the Departmental profile in numbers of incoming students annually, number of undergraduate and graduate students as well as number of facilities for graduate research.

He alluded to the nature of the undergraduate program philosophy based on the Departmental quality assurance policy, efforts to interact with the job market and most importantly the focus on the development of selected skills of the graduates to match specific professional profiles suggested by ESCO (European Skills, Competences, Qualifications and Occupations), the European multilingual classification of Skills, Competences and Occupations.

Finally, the framework of a SWOT analysis that was conducted preceding the development of the strategic development plan of this new Department was presented.

Teleconference with OMEA & MODIP Representatives

Participants:

- EEAP members

OMEA

- Professor Aristogiannis Garmpis
- Assoc. Professor Christos Pierrakeas
- Asst. Professor Antonia Stefani
- Asst. Professor Ioanna Giannoukou

MODIP

- Professor Giannikos Ioannis
- Professor Karalis Athanasios

MODIP Staff

- Papadadou Fieroula

There was a one-hour presentation by Professor Aristogiannis that was very comprehensive, referring to a large number of areas and issues of interest for the evaluation and accreditation of the Department. He discussed in greater length the Proposal for Accreditation document (Β1-Πρόταση Πιστοποίησης ΠΠΣ) of the Department.

An interactive discussion of questions and answers followed covering topics related to the departmental involvement in the ERASMUS program, the percent student participation in the class evaluation process, the ways that the department implements its interaction and outreach with the local job market and businesses, and the methods of dissemination of information to the students about issues and processes of support as they relate to their educational experience and interests.

Teleconference with Teaching Staff Members

Participants:

- EEAP members

Teaching Staff Members:

- Professor Hera Antonopoulou
- Professor Ioannis Mitropoulos
- Assoc. Professor Dionisios Kafousias
- Asst. Professor Niki Georgiadou
- Asst. Professor Dimitrios Papadopoulos
- Asst Professor Constantinos Chalkiopoulos

The discussion was initiated by the faculty's comment regarding the negative impact that the COVID-19 pandemic had on this Department that was established virtually concurrently with the start of the pandemic. That prompted a follow up discussion regarding the teaching staff perceptions about positive and negative aspects in the Department's operation and environment.

Positive aspects mentioned were the extreme enthusiasm and motivation of the faculty to support and promote the development of a young Department toward maturity and academic

excellence. A discussion followed about the uniqueness of the undergraduate program of studies which combines a Business and informatics / Communications curriculum of courses addressing the needs of the job market trends and is promoted as such to the high school graduates to attract new student enrolment.

Negative aspects mentioned were the need for upgrading the infrastructure of one of the buildings of the Department and the technological equipment infrastructure in general. The concern was raised that because the Department is new, the Ministry of Education has not yet authorized professional certification for the prospective graduates, a fact that creates a feeling of uncertainty to the students about prospects of employment upon graduation.

It was mentioned that the issue of student internships (πρακτική άσκηση) program for practical experience which is an integral part of any undergraduate program is in the planning stages and has not been implemented yet for this new Department. It was stated that there is an ongoing effort to encourage student participation in research and faculty research projects. However, in response to a question related to a Departmental research strategy, criteria or the link between teaching and research, there was no definitive answer.

Teleconference with Students

The participating students were on the 1st to the 3rd year of their studies. Among the issues and concerns that were brought up for discussion were:

- One student would like to see a Data Analysis track established in the program while another would like to see more diversity and variety in the electives offered in the program.

- They felt that their employment prospects were good because of the acquired knowledge through a diversity of courses in the program of studies

- They felt that there is no issue of available space with the facilities, nevertheless enhancement and upgrading is needed.

- Based on what the EEAP heard from the administration regarding the ERASMUS program administrative structure, students seemed to be inadequately informed about the program. Similar controversy was noted regarding the quality and effectiveness in the support provided by the Departmental administrative staff since the students did not seem to be aware of all service capabilities available through the departmental computerized information system.

- There was a discussion to clarify the nature of mandatory vs. voluntary class projects and their associated percentage of credit toward the class grade.

- It was felt that the available information in conjunction with the student advisor access and various job related and professional forums conducted every year, was adequate.

On-line tour of Facilities Accessible to Students

This session which includes a video with a virtual tour of the facilities with the participation of the EEAP panel and teaching staff that participated in a previous meeting was cancelled at the

request of the EEAP panel to conserve valuable scarce time from the schedule of the day. The EEAP members watched the video in their own time.

Teleconference with Employers and Social Partners

Participants:

- EEAP Members

Employers/Social Partners

- Dr. Nikos Katsougkrakis, Assistant to the Head of the Prefecture of Western Greece
- Mr. Cleovoulos Alexiadis, Association of Business Consultants
- Dr. Aris Meletiou, Head of General Directory of Informatics and Communications Infrastructure, General Secretariat of Information Systems of Public Administration, Ministry of Digital Governance
- Mr George Papas, President of the Economic Chamber of Achaia
- Mr. Theodore Tsoumbelis, General Secretary of the Chamber of Commerce of Achaia
- Mr. Stelios Koutroubinas, Association of Technological Enterprises of Western Greece

The EEAP panel was very pleased to meet this distinguished group of Business and Social partners of the Department, who by large had favourable comments about its current and potential future services to the region. One member went as far as stating that, to his knowledge, this Department was "a very fine example" and one of two such departments in the country serving the business community by filling a void needed for the training of prospective employees with a well-blended combination of business and technical (informatics) educational training. A follow up comment elaborating on this was about the reality in the job market where the typical university graduate lacks much needed practical experience. That brought up the subject of practical training which the partners encouraged the Department to implement swiftly, indicating interest in supporting it.

A discussion was held regarding the interrelationship, cooperation and interaction between the Department and the job market. The situation here is familiar with other institutions across the country where this interaction is rather ad hoc based on personal relationships between faculty members and businesses or agencies or developing as an extension of student practical training programs. The partners embraced the EEAP suggestion that the best way to establish and formalize this mutually beneficial relationship is the establishment of a formal Advisory Board with membership from both sides and an implemented digital communications and information exchange platform.

Dr. Nikos Katsoigridakis stated that the Prefecture of Western Greece is planning to initiate a series of one day seminars in entrepreneurship in conjunction with the Department that has a strong outreach culture and relevant graduate program in digital governance. The Department is one of three academic members in the Prefecture Council for Research. In addition, the Prefecture of Western Greece has concluded a study accompanied by a request to the Ministry of Digital Governance to enter into an agreement with the Department and utilize its

Entrepreneurship and Digital Innovation laboratory to develop a digital platform capable to automate the process of awarding of the "golden visa" to foreign investors who satisfy the relevant legal requirements.

Finally, Dr. Aris Meletiou reported that the Ministry of Digital Governance is planning to cooperate with the Department to conduct a series of daily informational seminars with the purpose of informing the academic communities and common citizens about the available tools, processes and benefits of Digital Governance.

Closure with Vice-Rector/President of MODIP, Head of the Department, OMEA & MODIP

Participants:

- EEAP Members

 Vice-Rector

- Professor Dionisios Mantzavinos

Head of the Department

- Assoc. Professor Vassilios Vassiliadis

OMEA

- Professor Aristogiannis Garmpis
- Assoc. Professor Christos Pierrakeas
- Asst. Professor Antonia Stefani
- Asst. Professor Ioanna Giannoukou

MODIP

- Professor Giannikos Ioannis
- Professor Karalis Athanasios

MODIP Staff

- Papadadou Fieroula

The purpose of this meeting was for the EEAP Chair to report to the participants, on behalf of the Panel, observations, comments and general results of the evaluation and accreditation process and solicit the same from the participants. It was interesting that during all sessions the perennial issues of understaffing and underfinancing were not brought up and discussed even though the EEAP is very aware that they exist as does the need for workload relief for the OMEA and MODIP faculty representatives. It was important to mention and be understood that the Department which was established concurrently with the start of the Covid-19 pandemic period has done a remarkable progress in its development and perhaps it is one of very few departments that not only had to adapt but develop its Program of Studies within a telecommunicating environment and culture.

Since this whole exercise aimed at evaluating and accrediting the Quality Assurance Policy and practices as they relate to all academic, administrative, and operational issues

of the Undergraduate Program of Studies, the EEAP strongly suggested to the Departmental personnel, in conjunction with the university community at large, to explore ways to get the student population more actively involved and aware of the benefits of Quality Assurance culture which requires the active involvement of both, the quality suppliers (the Department) and quality recipients (the students).

III.   New Undergraduate Study Programme in operation Profile

Information on the Departmental profile was provided in the OMEA presentation. EEAP found it very comprehensive and utilizes material of that presentation in this section of the report.

The Department is located in the city of Patras and is part of the School of Economics and Business. It was established in 2019. The number of incoming students since its establishment were 447 in 2019 and 289 in 2020. Currently it has 887 students and are about 47 students correspond to each faculty member. Out of the 19 faculty members, 3 are full professors, 3 are associate professors, 9 are assistant professors and 3 are lecturers. There are 3 specialized laboratory supervisors and 11 adjunct lecturers. The two departments of the (TEI) of Western Greece that merged with the Department were the Department of Business Administration located in Patras with 3,159 students and the Department of Business Administration located in Messolongion with 1,690 students.

The Department is located in Koukouli, a suburb of Patras, and in terms of facilities infrastructure it has:

- One amphitheatre with 185 seat capacity and 2 lecture rooms while another 6 lecture rooms are under construction

- Six computer laboratories with internet connection, 20 stations each

- One meeting and one teleconferencing room fully equipped

- One room for working partners and doctoral candidates

- WI-FI network

All lecture and laboratory rooms are in three different buildings with access facilities for handicapped persons. Faculty, technical personnel offices as well as the departmental administrative office are also located in these buildings. A library and information centre branch of the University of Patras is also located in Koukouli and includes reading and study areas. It is also directly connected electronically with the main University library in Patras. The Department has two certified research laboratories to use for research activities.

Academically, after merging and absorbing the resources of the two TEI's mentioned above, the Program of Studies of the Department, as evidenced by documents B.11 and B.12 of the Proposal for Accreditation, fulfils a void in the School of Economics and Business Administration by providing a comprehensive technical and administrative educational background that better serves the needs of the business and community, as was attested by one of the employers / social partners during one of the meetings.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

c. The documentation of the feasibility of the operation of the department and the study programme
The feasibility of the operation of the new department should be justified based on:
- *the needs of the national and regional economy (economic sectors, employment, supply-demand, expected academic and professional qualifications)*
- *comparison with other national and international study programmes of the same scientific field*
- *the state-of-the-art developments*

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

d. The documentation of the sustainability of the new department

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

e. The structure of studies

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

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

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

Relevant documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

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

The EEAP examined the following documentation and material for the assessment and evaluation of the academic profile and mission of the Department of Management Science and Technology of the University of Patras:

- University of Patras website section of:

 - https://modip.upatras.gr/el/node 356

- B1. Proposal for Accreditation

- B2. MODIP Introductory Report

- B4. Departmental Feasibility and Sustainability Study

- B7. Quality Assurance Policy of the Department

- B9. Departmental Goal Attainment

- Department Chair Presentation

- OMEA Presentation

Findings

The academic profile of the Department matches two of the internationally established scientific fields of higher education according to the international classification of fields of knowledge of UNESCO (ISCED 2013): (1) (041 Business and administration) and (2) (061 Information and Communication Technologies). The Departmental Program of Studies was designed and operates independently from the Study Programs of the two TEI's that it merged with. Part A.III of this report has an additional brief discussion about the Undergraduate Program Profile.

In the submitted documentation to the EEAP there seems to be a lot of confusion regarding a concise departmental mission statement

a. On the University website, the departmental mission statement is too broad and lengthy, stating: The mission of the Department is to provide training and research in the areas of Administrative Science related to modern technologies and organizational studies, with emphasis on the use of quantitative methods, information and communication in decision making, business strategy development and reorganization. business activities. The increasing role played by new technologies today in the development and operation of businesses, the need for electronic interconnection of modern plant activities, the need for organizational transformation of businesses and the pressure exerted by international competition significantly differentiates knowledge and skills that business executives and organizations must have. The Department of Management Science and Technology aims at preparing executives in this category, so the emphasis of the curriculum is on the interdisciplinary integration of the administrative and technological disciplines.

b. Document B4, Departmental Feasibility and Sustainability Study, states: The mission of the Department is to be recognized nationally and internationally for its contributions to the scientific field.

c. Document B5, Departmental Four-Year Business Plan states: The mission of the Department is to inspire the new generation of graduates and become a leader in education and research in the areas of Data Science for Decision Making, Digital Economy, e-Business, Circular Sustainable Economy, Contemporary Industrial Models (Industry 4.0), Smart Cities and Models of the New Generation (Cloud Technologies, Internet of Things and Artificial Intelligence in Business).

In spite of the confusion, EEAP believes that part of the Departmental vision statement has been achieved by the Study Program which has filled the void that is perceived to exist in the job market in terms of combining the disciplines of Business Administration and Informatics, thus, offering to the graduates a business background with a technological foundation that better matches the needs of the relevant job market on a European and international scale.

Analysis

To enhance the mission and strategic goals and facilitate the placement of graduates of this useful interdisciplinary educational background in the market, as it is reflected by the profile of the Study Program, the Department will need to promote the program and expand its visibility by strengthening its outreach to the local business community, partnering with similar institutions internationally, and be constantly active in revising, upgrading and modernizing the Program of Studies, while keeping up with the technological developments in the fields of Informatics and Communications.

Conclusion

The Department after acquiring the TEI resources, has designed a rather unique interdisciplinary Study Program that will most likely ensure its sustainability and long-term growth.

b. The strategy of the Institution for its Academic Development

The EEAP examined the following documentation and material for assessing the strategy of the Department for its academic development:

- University of Patras website section of:

- https://modip.upatras.gr/el/node/365

- B1. Proposal for Accreditation

- B5. Departmental Four-Year Business Plan

- B8. Institutional Goal Attainment Plan

- B9. Departmental Goal Attainment Plan

<u>Findings</u>

The information included in the above-mentioned documents indicates that the Strategic Academic plan and Goals of the Department are compatible with those of the institution. They include discussions about a wealth of issues and areas of endeavour that needed to be considered by the institution (University of Patras) to assess the transformation of an existing Department into one that absorbed resources from two other existing TEI departments and had to modify its profile and redesign its curriculum. Moreover, they justify the feasibility of its existence and the sustainability of its operation.

Finally, in the Proposal for Accreditation, a tabular display of strategic goals and associated operational goals was presented, which despite its lack of breadth, was compatible and in the same format as the one used for the Internal Quality Assurance System of the institution. A more extensive discussion and display of goals associated with the Department and its Program of Studies is included in the Four-Year Business Plan, in a descriptive form rather in a quantifiable form, with (KPIs) values associated with the goals and subgoals, but then again, this was just a plan and not a real operational instrument.

<u>Analysis</u>

It is evident that for the information included in the B1, B5, B8 and B9 documents, a lot of thought and effort has been invested by the Departmental personnel to make its case to the Institution that the redesign of the Department and its Program of Studies would result in a change that would add value to the Institution at no extra cost, other than that of supporting the acquired personnel, which would be taken care of by an increased budget. In general, the new program would expand the educational horizon of the Institution and would have a positive impact on higher education of the country.

<u>Conclusion</u>

The reorganized structure of the new Department accompanied by the redesigned Program of Studies was justified based on a well thought out planning process, effective justification analysis and reasonable, realistic assessment about its role and impact on the mother Institution and higher education in general.

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

The EEAP obtained information for the feasibility of the operation of the Department and its Program of Studies from:

- The OMEA presentation

- B1. Proposal for Accreditation

- B4. Departmental Feasibility and Sustainability Study

- B5 Departmental Four-Year Business Plan

<u>Findings</u>

In terms of operation, the Department has the necessary facilities to ensure an appropriate teaching and learning environment for the new Program of Studies. There are 4 buildings in which there are the offices of the teaching and supportive staff, a shared auditorium, 10 classrooms, 6 laboratories fully equipped Lastly, the Department hosts two institutionalized Research Laboratories connected to the learning areas of Management Science and Technology. There was no critical problem brought up regarding the adequacy of academic and administrative personnel.

<u>Analysis</u>

The redesigned Program of Studies has a strategy and goals compatible with the institutional ones and value-added aspects for the institution. It is structurally similar to other departments in existence, and most importantly, would prove to be a change in a positive direction rather than a liability for the institution. The geographic, business and population demographics for the prefecture of Achaia and Western Greece in general, coupled with the high activity in all economic and productive sectors, as compared with all Greek prefectures, offers great potential for growth to a department that combines business and technology and potentially can supply a high percentage of graduates with this skill to the job market. Finally, the Department has established two graduate programs in its areas of concentration which are intended to fulfil the professional needs of the local area and beyond.

From a feasibility point of view the Department conducted and presented a SWOT analysis relative to three operational dimensions, teaching, research, and administration. Once the approach to resolve each one of the identified weaknesses in the SWOT analysis was determined, the decision to redesign the Department was adopted.

<u>Conclusion</u>

The smooth and rather successful operation of the Program of Studies thus far, coupled with the favourable comments of the students and employers / social partners that the EEAP met with, has demonstrated its feasibility, and the strategic plan of the Department suggests continuous development into the future.

d. The document of the sustainability of the new department

<u>Findings</u>

The issues of feasibility and sustainability of the Department and its Program of Studies are combined in document B4, Departmental Feasibility and Sustainability Study, supplemented by other documents mentioned in part 1 (c) and the video presentation on the facilities and technological infrastructure. In terms of future facilities and technological infrastructure needs the discussion was limited to issues of upgrading.

In terms of the program of Studies design, in all documents there was an indication that an investigation of developments in the digital technologies market and the higher education in general was conducted to assess these two attributes relative to the potential of departmental success. The SWOT analysis presented was well organized and the results were properly

interpreted. An assessment was made also on the knowledge and skill areas that should be pursued, including but not limited to:

- Data Science for Decision Making
- Digital Economy
- e-Business
- Circular Sustainable Economy
- Contemporary Industrial Models (Industry 4.0)
- Smart Cities and Models of the New Generation such as, Cloud Technologies, Internet of Things and Artificial Intelligence in Business.

Analysis

A Study Program plan which includes the areas of knowledge enumerated above, seems ambitious and potentially promising to enjoy success and sustainability. The Four-Year plan submitted deals with the evaluation of all parameters and operational aspects affecting and affected by the Department, both internally and externally, and their impact on the aspects of Feasibility and Sustainability of the Department and its Program of Studies.

Conclusion

The Program of Studies, as planned and as implemented thus far, has demonstrated its feasibility. The EEAP feels that, in the long run, further developments such as the enhancement and expansion of its graduate programs, its outreach and cooperation with the business community, its strengthening of research activities, relations with other sister departments and more international exposure will ensure its sustainability.

e. The structure of studies

The organisation of studies:
The department was created in 2018 and started its operation in the academic year 2019-2020. Studies are organized in semesters and are aligned with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

The faculty is comprised of 19 members of which 3 full professors, 3 associate professors, 9 assistant professors and 3 lecturers.

The number of students admitted so far per year is as follows: 347 in 2019 and 289 in 2020, while the total number of active students today is 887 (hence 46,68 students per faculty member). However, the department aims to reduce this number to less than 220 per year.

The courses are organized into semesters as follows:

Basic knowledge (semesters 1-4)

Specialization (semesters 5-8)

Horizontal skills (mainly in semester 9)

Learning processes:

All course syllabi and the undergraduate course catalogue are rigorous and provide clear information about course structure and learning outcomes. The instructors set clear expectations on the courses and clarify the course assessment methods in the beginning of each semester.

Learning outcomes:

During its discussions with students the panel heard that the students were extremely satisfied by the teaching they receive, the overall atmosphere in the department and the help and guidance they get from their teachers. The external stakeholders who met with the panel were extremely satisfied by the qualifications of the students they receive.

During its discussions with students, the EEAP heard that the students were extremely concerned about the recognition of the professional qualifications of their diploma. ETHAEE should examine this issue closely with the appropriate government authorities.

f. The number of admitted students

The department has just finished its third year of operation and it now has a total of 887 active students with an average of just under 300 students per year. However, the department aims to reduce this number to less than 220 per year.

The EEAP has no access to information on similar departments in other Higher Educational Institutions with the possibility of student transfers from / to newly established departments.

g. Postgraduate studies and research

Findings

The Department has two Postgraduate Programs:
1. Master of Science in Education Management which is in compliance with the requirements of Law 4485/2017.
2. Master of Science in Digital Innovation and Management with one option specializing in Digital Marketing and another option specializing in e-Government.

There are currently 25 doctoral students participating in these two programs.

Analysis

There was mention on the support provided by the existence of two laboratories for these programs but no evidence provided to the EEAP regarding research activities, publications, grands or other sources of funding, even though in the meeting with external business and social partners some cooperative projects were mentioned such as one with the Ministry of Digital Governance.

Conclusion

Beyond the information provided for the two existing postgraduate degree programs, the EEAP did not receive any information regarding detailed research activity and results or a research strategy. The EEAP, however, recognized the enthusiasm and ambition displayed by the Department to put in place graduate work and activity which will benefit the local community and fulfill the expectations of the external business and social partners.

Panel Judgement

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

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

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

Panel Recommendations

R1a.1 Develop a research strategy for the Department to enhance its profile and reputation in the Higher Education environment.

R1b.1 Develop a compact, concise, realistic mission statement.

R1f.1 Resolve the issue of the recognition of the professional qualifications of the undergraduate diploma.

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

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

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

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

Findings:

The Institution implements a Quality Assurance Policy which is aligned with the principles provided by ETHAAE. The Institution has in place an accredited Internal Quality Assurance System, and formulates and applies a Quality Assurance Policy, which is part of its strategy, specializes in the operation of the new academic units and the new study programs, and is accompanied by annual quality assurance goals for the continuous development and improvement of the academic units and the study programs.

The undergraduate program of the department has well defined objectives and follows best national and international practices. The program is comprehensive and focused, with a sensible balance of fundamental and applied learning outcomes. The program combines the

disciplines of Business Administration and Informatics / Communications Technology, in line with the most recent developments in the field of Economics and Informatics.

The overall structure and content of the program is similar to other established programs in Europe and North America. There is a reasonable balance of core and elective courses, with appropriate depth and coverage of current and emerging themes. The program includes specialized courses in important and impactful areas of Information Technologies including AI, Security, Data Science and Human-Computer Interaction.

For its continuous improvement the Study Program benefits from feedback it receives from employers, professional Chambers of Greece, External Stakeholders and Alumni as well as by faculty research by linking and integrating faculty research activities and results in the curriculum.

The Department has established a formal faculty advisor scheme to assist students throughout their studies. Apart from that, students indicated that faculty are helpful and always available when students need advice or assistance in their studies. Faculty appear to care for and work closely with students to help them grow and succeed. Faculty also strive to maintain a positive, collegial and collaborative culture and a sense of community in the department.

The program is compliant with the ECTS system. The students have opportunities to take courses abroad, thanks to ERASMUS program and bilateral agreements between the department and universities abroad. The number of students who take advantage of these opportunities remains small which is understandable for a newly created department.

All course syllabi and the undergraduate course catalogue are rigorous and provide clear information on course structure and learning outcomes. The instructors set clear expectations on the courses and clarify the course assessment methods in the beginning of each academic term.

The Institution Quality Assurance system ensures that the Department has clear objectives and keeps track of the relevant indicators for quality assurance following well defined procedures. However, although well documented, these procedures are mostly written in the form of text. Standardizing the procedures using some visual tool (e.g., flow-charts) will certainly help their quick understanding and enhance the benefits from their use ("a picture is worth a thousand words").

One important source of feedback for monitoring and improving quality is student questionnaires. Unfortunately, participation from students in the questionnaires is low (as in many other institutions around the country). Particular attention should be given by the department in trying to remedy this problem and instil to students and teachers alike that quality is a fundamental dimension in all aspects of human endeavour be it academic or professional.

Another important source of feedback for monitoring and improving quality comes from professional stakeholders (and later on, from the alumni). This feedback process is rather ad-hoc, based on personal contacts among faculty and external stakeholders. The EEAP was told that there is no legal framework for establishing an Advisory Board. Nevertheless, the establishment of such a board (even informally) comprising academic staff and external stakeholders should be very beneficial to both.

The Department is in the initial stages of establishing an alumni network. Establishing this network would help students link to professional networks nationally and internationally and benefit the overall visibility and reputation of the department.

The Department maintains several outreach activities such as presenting the department to high schools, talks by its staff to external stakeholders, participation in local and national events (e.g., Patras IQ).

During its discussions with industrial representatives, the EEAP was satisfied to hear that the department is one of the rare examples in Greece of an institution in line with real market needs. It was also stressed that the qualifications of the department's graduates were well sought after by domestic and foreign employers.

During its discussions with students, the EEAP heard that the students were extremely satisfied by the overall atmosphere in the department and the help and guidance they get form their teachers. However, they expressed concern about the recognition of the professional qualifications of their diploma.

Student interviews indicated a strong interest for closer interaction with industry and further opportunities to prepare themselves for the labour market. Currently, a rather small percentage of students participate in and benefit from practical training, which is not yet formally integrated in the program of studies.

Finally, a particular problem that MODIP has been facing is that of the absorption of the two departments of the TEI of Western Greece without impacting the quality of studies in the newly created department. The approach adopted by the department is to allow students registered at TEI to follow one of two paths: (a) terminate their studies at the TEI or (b) follow corresponding courses at the department and graduate from the department (see also Principle 12 for more details).

Analysis:

A number of weak points impacting Quality Assurance were identified which need to be attended by the department (see "recommendations" below). However, the department is in its very early state of operation and the EEAP is convinced that, given the enthusiasm of the academic staff, all these weak points will be attended in the best possible manner.

Conclusions:

A very young and dynamic department with great potential and filling a real market need.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R2.1 Standardize Quality Assurance procedures using flow-charts

R2.2 Find ways to increase student participation in the questionnaires

R2.3 Institute an Advisory Board (even informal)

R2.4 Progressively establish an alumni network

R2.5 Pursue the recognition of the professional qualifications for the undergraduate diploma

R2.6 Take steps to improve outdated technical infrastructure and the downgraded state of buildings

R2.7 Resolve secretarial support issues by providing better information to students relating to available services

R2.8 Include the practical training in the official undergraduate program credit structure

R2.9 Expand, enhance, and quantify the set of departmental goals as they have been described in the Four-Year Plan document of the Department

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

Institutions should design the new undergraduate programmes following a defined written process, which will involve the participants, information sources and the approval committees for the programme. The objectives, the expected learning outcomes, the intended professional qualifications and the ways to achieve them are set out in the programme design. The above details, as well as information on the programme's structure, are published in the Student Guide.

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

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

Relevant documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

Findings:

The following documents were considered for the findings stated in this principle:
- Student Guide
- B4. Departmental Feasibility and Sustainability Study
- B5. Departmental Four-Year Business Plan
- B13. Courses for the acquisition of digital skills
- Course Outlines

The programme has been designed based on appropriate standards using several sources. The Curriculum Committee, the General Assembly and student representatives take part in the process. The study programme follows the practices employed by top universities with similar subjects or fields of studies. Additionally, other scientific or business entities - like the Economic Chamber of Greece - participated actively in the process.

Numerous factors were taken into account during the creation of the objectives, the expected learning outcomes, the intended professional qualifications and the associated ways to be achieved. Specifically, factors that were considered were mostly students' evaluations and complaints, professors' proposals, strategic goals of the university, external stakeholders' opinions based on their working experience etc.

The feasibility study (B4) for the new undergraduate programme sufficiently addresses the related objectives in the course outline. However, even though the expected outputs are presented in the goals of each course, no information is provided regarding the professional recognition of the diploma.

The curriculum course load compares with appropriate, universally accepted standards for the specific area of study as it uses the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS).

The structure of the programme is quite rational and clearly articulated. 240 ECTS points are required in total for the successful acquisition of the diploma, divided in 30 ECTS points per semester for 8 semesters in total. In the 5th semester the students have to choose between 2 specializations, the one of Business Decision Making and the other of Information Systems. Throughout the undergraduate programme there are numerous courses ensuring the acquisition of digital skills, 10 courses in the 2 first years and then there are more in the following years, depending on the specialization each student follows.

There is also a procedure in place for yearly revisions of the programme curriculum as discussed in the Institutional Quality Assurance Manual.

The EEAP considers that the Student Guide is complete, concise and appropriate, as it contains all information needed and presented it very well and comprehensively.

Analysis / Conclusions:

The department has developed a sufficient and up-to-date undergraduate study programme with the support of many participants. Document B4 discusses the similarities and / or differences of this undergraduate programme as compared to similar departments of other

institutions in Greece, such as the Management Science and Technology of Athens University of Economics and Business. The duration of the programme is rational and compatible to all other programmes of the same academic field.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R2.1 Provide the Student Guide in the form of a video presentation to facilitate its use by the students. The video should include the content of each course, the projects, the style of the lectures, the timeline and the extra activities that are linked to this course.

R2.2 Consider the adoption of a Data Analysis track in the undergraduate Program of Studies.

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

The academic unit should ensure that the new undergraduate programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process. The assessment methods should reflect this approach.

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

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

Relevant documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

Findings:

- B16. Sample of Student Questionnaires
- B17. Regulation for dealing with students' complaints and appeals
- B18. The role and responsibilities of the Academic Advisor.
- https://www.dept.upatras.gr/akadimaikos-symvoylos/
- https://synigorosfoititi.upatras.gr/

The approach is student-centered as there is a wide variety of pedagogical methods such problem-based learning and task-based learning, there are flexible learning paths such as participating in team projects and faculty research, contributing to academic papers, taking part in activities. There are also different modes of delivery such as lectures and seminars in which students have the opportunity to interact with professionals in the field.

The students are seen as active partners in the learning process as their participation in alternative learning activities is impressively high. According to the teaching staff, about 50-60% of the students take part in optional projects. Students are encouraged to have an active role in conferences and competitions with the support of their professors.

The assessment criteria for student performance are published in advance in the course outline of each course, in the e-class platform and are also announced during the 1st lecture of the term and throughout the semester as well.

The student satisfaction surveys are conducted between the 8th and 10th week of each semester, in an electronic way. Additionally, through the Academic Advisor, each student can give feedback and share any thoughts, comments and ideas for improvement. What is more, the Complaints Platform also serves the goal of commenting on the effectiveness of teaching.

The Document B18 outlines the role and responsibilities of the Academic Advisor.

There is a formal procedure for student appeals in place which includes the Academic Counsellor, the Complaints Platform, the Undergraduate Programme Committee and most importantly the Student Advocate.

In general, we consider that the programme is delivered in an environment that promotes mutual respect and puts the students in the centre of the learning and developing process.

Analysis / Conclusions:

The new undergraduate programme is delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in the learning process. The assessment methods should encourage the participation of students in projects and activities and give count it as an appropriate percentage of their final grade.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R4.1 Require mandatory projects in some courses the results of which should be presented by the students in the classroom to familiarize them with presentation skills and audience interaction in a question /answer setting.

R4.2 Promote and encourage student feedback and constructive criticism so that the students are more likely to participate in any opportunity of assessment and offer their ideas for improvement.

R4.3 Involve students in the design of the questionnaires that evaluate the courses.

R4.4 Some questions that could be included in the questionnaires are

- h. "Which is the best characteristic in your professor / Strengths"
- **i.** "What the professor should do differently / Weaknesses"

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

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

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

- *the registration procedure of the admitted students and the necessary documents - according to the law - and the support of the newly admitted students*

- *student rights and obligations, and monitoring of student progression*

- *internship issues, granting of scholarships*

- *the procedures and terms for writing the thesis (diploma or degree)*

- *the procedure of award and recognition of degrees, the duration of studies, the conditions for progression and assurance of the progress of students in their studies*

as well as

- *the terms and conditions for enhancing student mobility*

Appropriate recognition procedures rely on relevant academic practice for recognition of credits among various European academic departments and Institutions in line with the principles of the Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region. Graduation represents the culmination of the students' study period. Students need to receive documentation explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes, and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed (Diploma Supplement).

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

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

<u>Findings:</u>

The materials that were taken into consideration were:

- Electronic Diploma Supplement
- Internal regulation for the approval of the new study programme
- Regulation of studies (TEI)
- https://www.upatras.gr/foitites/foitisi/erasmus/

- https://www.upatras.gr/international-relations/erasmus/programma-erasmus/
- https://www.upatras.gr/international-relations/erasmus/programma-erasmus/erasmus-sto-panepistimio-patron/

Before going to the campus, students have the opportunity to gain much information as they have access to the Study Guide in advance which is always available on the website enabling everyone to see. It explains everything about the university life, processes, courses, teaching and supportive staff clearly and in detail. What is more, incoming students are supported in having a smooth transmission to the University by attending a customized informative event, a ceremony that welcomes them to the university. During this ceremony, which usually takes places in the 1st or 2nd week of the semester, students are provided with details concerning the undergraduate programme, the services offered by the department, the way some procedures operate, the clubs and societies of the University etc.

The students' progression is monitored through the electronic platform ("PROGRESS") of the department's administrative support. Through this platform the students have access to the courses they have succeeded in, their grades and generally their progression.

Students' mobility is encouraged as all the scholarships - including those from foreign institutions, global organizations, research centres - are promoted on the website. Although the department operates only for 3 years now, there are already 23 agreements with universities from foreign countries that give the opportunity to 3-4 people each to attend a mobility programme with ERASMUS+ .There is an ERASMUS+ office in the university that centrally manages the applications. Additionally, there is a departmental ERASMUS+ coordinator that supports the students during the whole process. Each year an informative event takes place in order for students to understand how the programme works, what are the requirements, what is the timeline etc.

The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is well applied across the curriculum and therefore the full academic acknowledgement of the courses that students were successfully examined in in a foreign university is assured.

The Department issues a Diploma supplement to each student upon graduation.

The academic unit has defined a set of requirements for the implementation of the Thesis (Final Year Project) that specifically states when and how a student is able to conduct a Thesis, the number of points that are accredited, who participated in the grading of the paper, all the stages of the submission process and the presentation process, as well as the next steps that should be taken in order for the whole project to be completed. A very important and non-negotiable next step is the plagiarism check and - after that - the inclusion of all the corrections suggested, if any. A Thesis Handbook is included in the Study Regulations (article 17).

Practical training is not formally in place yet, due to the short period of time the department is in existence. However, a significant network seems to have been developed, including members of the local government, businessmen of the local market, citizens of the local community that have eager to create a formal bond with the university, its students and its teachers and even the Ministry of Digital Governance. Currently, academic staff take the initiative to develop individual ideas and take advantage of their personal network in order to help their students find suitable opportunities for their practical training. For the upcoming

years 2021-2027 the department intends to add the practical training of two months as an elective course.

Analysis / Conclusions:

By the documents submitted and examined, the EEAP concludes that the department has the processes of Student Admission, Progression, Recognition of Academic Qualifications and Award of Degrees and Certificates of Competence of the New Study Programmes well defined and documented. It must be noted that the issue of professional qualifications of the diploma is still to be resolved.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R5.1

Establish a follow-up orientation session later in the semester to give the incoming students another opportunity to absorb the information they obtained the first day and give them the

R5.2

Ensure that the department has developed its own Regulation of Studies in addition to the Regulation of Studies inherited from the two merged departments of the TEI until the merger is concluded.

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

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

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

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

Relevant documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

Findings:

The appointment of academic personnel is centralized and regulated by Greek government legislation; they use clear, transparent systems for choosing adequately qualified professionals who recognize the value of education and research.

The curriculum vitae (CV) of academic staff members, which are available on the Departmental website, demonstrate that they have expertise in their teaching specialties, but they are not sufficiently lengthy or detailed, they do not mention their publications and other research endeavours.

Furthermore, the EEAP feels that the Department has a weak research record, lack of research strategy and mandatory standards for publications.

The Department offers sabbaticals to its academic staff, but it doesn't seem like they've taken use of this chance. 23 ERASMUS+ agreements have been signed by the Department; however, the academic staff has not taken advantage of the numerous ERASMUS+ travel chances for professional development.

Analysis:

The EEAP considers that the Department does not have enough finances to support conference attendance and other academic/research activities based on the evidence supplied and interactions with the Department's academic personnel. The EEAP noted the absence of a defined mechanism for the annual evaluation of academic personnel in relation to their personal and professional growth. The matter appears to be handled with informal discussions and no minutes taken.

Conclusions:

The Department is partially compliant with Principle 6. Professional development and promotion procedures for academic employees should be prioritized. They need to expand the link between research and teaching.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R6.1 Explore ways to expand the link between research and teaching.

R6.2 Review the procedures for professional development so they are taken up by the staff.

R6.3 Develop a research strategy, establish a list of required/recommended journals for publications and introduce criteria for the research performance of the academic staff.

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

Institutions should have adequate funding to meet the needs for the operation of the academic unit and the new study programme as well as the means to cover all their teaching and learning needs. They should -on the one hand- provide satisfactory infrastructure and services for learning and student support and -on the other hand- facilitate direct access to them by establishing internal rules to this end (e.g., lecture rooms, laboratories, libraries, networks, boarding, career and social policy services, etc.).

> *Institutions and their academic units must have sufficient resources, on a planned and long-term basis, to support learning and academic activity in general, in order to offer students the best possible level of studies. The above means include facilities such as, the necessary general and specific libraries and possibilities for access to electronic databases, study rooms, educational and scientific equipment, information and communication services, support and counselling services. When allocating the available resources, the needs of all students must be taken into consideration (e.g. whether they are full-time or part-time students, employed students, students with disabilities), in addition to the shift towards student-centred learning and the adoption of flexible modes of learning and teaching. Support activities and facilities may be organised in various ways, depending on the institutional context. Students should be informed about all available services. In delivering support services, the role of support and administration staff is crucial and therefore this segment of staff needs to be qualified and have opportunities to develop its competences.*

Relevant documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

Findings:

The EEAP used the following sources:

- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wg4C3IQpL38
- https://www.upatras.gr/foitites/paroches/
- https://www.upatras.gr/foitites/foititikes-omades/
- EEAP and Students/Teachers/ Staff Meetings

The Department has the necessary facilities to ensure an appropriate teaching and learning environment for the new undergraduate programme. There are 4 buildings in which there are the offices of the teaching and supportive staff, a shared auditorium, 10 classrooms, 6 laboratories fully equipped (capacity of 20 students each); it appears that no equipment inventory is kept. All the above are accessible to people with special needs, have elevators and ramps. In the campus there is also a library with rooms to study, a meeting room and a room for partners and doctoral candidates. Lastly, the Department hosts two institutionalized

Research Laboratories connected to the learning areas of Management Science and Technology.

There is an adequate range of support services available to the university students. They have access to the webmail, e-class platform, progression tracking system ("PROGRESS"), free wi-fi connection via Eduroam, library etc. Additionally, they can benefit from the services offered at the main campus of Patras, such as the Office of Student Support Services, Career Office of the University, Sports Facilities and the various social Activity Groups, information about which is available on the website.

There is administrative staff to ensure the smooth operation of the student support services. However, the students are not sufficiently informed about the offered services and the processes that need to be followed and, thus, they do not take full advantage of them.

Analysis

It appears that there is no rational distribution of the existing facilities, because many of them are under renovation and the equipment used is rather outdated.
The administrative office of the Department currently serves the students of the pre-existing departments (TEI) and the current cohort of students.

Conclusions:

The department is under development due to the merger; the EEAP expects these problems to be resolved when the merger is completed.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R7.1 Ensure that the students are well informed about the processes as well as the role and the responsibilities of the administrative staff.

R7.2 Develop an inventory of the available equipment and other assets of the Department and audit it regularly.

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

The Institutions and their academic units bear full responsibility for collecting, analysing and using information, aimed at the efficient management of undergraduate programmes of study and related activities, in an integrated, effective and easily accessible way.

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

Relevant documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

Findings:

The student information is handled by a central university system called PROGRESS. The EEAP understands that all students that are enrolled in the Department are on that system but the students that had enrolled in the TEI are in a different system; this causes considerable extra work for the administration, e.g. issuing certificates.

Course evaluations are handled by an internally developed software, that appears to be rather rudimentary. It was not demonstrated that it can handle key performance indicators (KPIs), such as student retention/progression, academic performance, and research excellence and collaboration with other institutions. There were few graphs and summaries available to the EEAP for data analysis, since the Department is on transition and it operates only for three years.

Analysis:

The available data only related to the improvement of teaching and other services provided to the students and the academic staff. However, there are several crucial areas that require additional procedures to enable the reporting of quantifiable actions on particular courses. In

its absence, the dates of implementation and the prior activities and their influence on each course's delivery may not be determined.

Conclusions:

The EEAP determined that Departmental information management is inadequate; (i) there is limited data because the Department is only in the 3rd year of operation, (ii) there is insufficient data collection, analysis and processing.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R8.1 Develop and document a formalized data collection, processing and analysis procedure.

Principle 9: Public Information Concerning the New Undergraduate Programmes

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

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

Findings:

The information publicly available on the website of the Department of Management Science and Technology of the University of Patras is rather moderate and basic covering the structure, its purpose, quality assurance policies, and other aspects of its operations. Further, detailed information relative to the departmental Quality Assurance policy is provided in the Quality Manual of the Institution and / or the MODIP website link.

Similarly, on the Department's website one can find information on teaching. There is a PDF file for the outline of each course, its structure, mode of assessment, criteria of assessment etc. There is inadequate website design, just a collection of PDF files, making navigation very difficult. There is limited information about research, administration, recent news, and upcoming events as they relate to the Institution.

Analysis:

The information found in the Departmental Greek webpage version is covering most queries, while the English version of the website is very minimal and covers only basic queries. The website only covers the very basic, standard information and it does not appear to be regularly updated.

Students may wish to search for information on the study programme, the faculty profiles, research activity and other accomplishments. However, the CVs of the academic staff include limited information. Although the website addresses and covers crucial information, its depth is fairly narrow.

Conclusions:

The Department must specify and construct a well-structured website based on a university-wide website template and in accordance with applicable standards and processes. It is currently rather dry in places, with online pages linking to rather lengthy PDF files. The volume of information is not presented in a consistent manner, making navigation and identification of the information sought by the user difficult in many cases.

The public information provided should be user-friendly and useful, e.g. linking studies with the job market and entrepreneurship, internationalization etc., and be regularly updated on various events, such as seminars and lectures that aim to bring together the academic community.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R9.1 Expand the English version website to match the Greek version

R9.2 Develop a well-structured website based on a university-wide website template

Principle 10: Periodic Internal Review of the New Study Programmes

Institutions and academic units should have in place an internal quality assurance system, for the audit and annual internal review of their new programmes, so as to achieve the objectives set for them, through monitoring and amendments, with a view to continuous improvement. Any actions taken in the above context, should be communicated to all parties concerned.

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

Relevant documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

This annual auditing process is a responsibility of the OMEA under the supervision of and in coordination with MODIP. To evaluate this Principle, in addition to the discussions with the groups, the EEAP examined the following documents and information at its disposal:

- B1. Proposal for Accreditation

- B9. Undergraduate Program Goals

- B4. Departmental Four Year Business Plan

- Quality Manual of the University of Patras

- https://modip.upatras.gr

- Department Chair and OMEA Presentations

- B15. Minutes of Departmental Internal Review

Findings:

Pages 44 to 48 of the Institutional Quality Manual discuss the process of the Periodic Internal Quality Assurance System Review. A section in this discussion refers specifically to the Internal

Review of Study Programs outlining the purpose, the issues involved, the information that must be collected and assessed, the responsibilities of each party involved, and most importantly, outlines the process from start to finish. It includes all standard working and reporting documents that could be used. It also displays the process in the form of a flowchart.

The EEAP noted that the Department, in the submitted Proposal for Accreditation document, presented a thorough and enhanced description of the process of the re-evaluation, redefinition and updating of the Study Program following the process described in the Quality Manual.

In the OMEA presentation there was an excellent, thorough discussion of the perceived weaknesses of the Study Program in addition to the outlined strengths, as part of a SWOT analysis. Suggestions were mentioned of how to mitigate the weaknesses.

In the B9, Undergraduate Program Goals document, there were quality improvement targets given but there was no supporting analysis to justify the aspired target levels. The set of goals presented was very limited and did not include the ones mandated by the Internal Quality Assurance system or ETHAAE which must be monitored. In contrast, about 50% of the content of document B4, Departmental Four-Year Business Plan, was devoted to an extensive discussion of perceived departmental goals presented in the standard tabular form. EEAP determined this to be a thorough, valuable information to serve as the basis for the revision of the formally adopted goal set of the Department, as displayed in document B1, Proposal for Accreditation and quantified via appropriate Key Performance indicators (KPI,s).

Analysis:

The last paragraph of the Periodic Internal Review of the Study Program, Principle 10, in the Proposal for Accreditation in effect expresses the opinion of the EEAP by stating that, due to the short period of the Departmental operation, the description of processes involved in the Internal Review of the Program, as discussed, have never been fully applied and no significant revision of the existing Program of Studies has been implemented other than minor adjustments to a small number of courses. It must be noted that the tabular presentation of goal attainment in document B9, indicates that there have been two Internal Evaluations of the Program of Studies in the past. Documentation on one Departmental Internal Evaluation has been provided via document B15. It is short and even though it does not relate to the Program of Studies or substantially conforms to the review requirements, at least gives an indication of the review model that may be used in the future when adequate historical data will be available.

Conclusions:

The material presented by the Department in the Proposal for Accreditation document to demonstrate the implementation of the various phases involved in the Internal Review Process (re-evaluation) of the Undergraduate Program was limited only to a general description of the process, as suggested in the Quality Assurance Manual. The example given of a past annual internal review was abbreviated and incomplete. Thus, the EEAP does not have enough evidence upon which to judge compliance and recognizes that the reason that the Department

has not submitted a thoroughly executed and documented example of the Internal Evaluation Process of its Undergraduate Program is the short time frame that has been in existence and not enough information is available for that purpose. However, the Department should commit to fully implement the process as soon as adequate historical data is available to use for comparisons and revisions.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R10.1 The Department should execute and document the procedure of periodic Internal evaluation of the Study Program by following the model outlined in the University Quality Manual which includes scope, ownership, procedural steps and associated flow diagram, inputs, outputs, controls and measurable goals. On-going records of this process implementation should be kept. Once developed, the procedure can be used for future evaluations.

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

The new undergraduate study programmes should regularly undergo evaluation by panels of external experts set by HAHE, aiming at accreditation. The results of the external evaluation and accreditation are used for the continuous improvement of the Institutions, academic units and study programmes. The term of validity of the accreditation is determined by HAHE.

HAHE is responsible for administrating the programme accreditation process which is realised as an external evaluation procedure and implemented by a panel of independent experts. HAHE grants accreditation of programmes, based on the Reports submitted by the panels, with a specific term of validity, following to which revision is required. The accreditation of the quality of the programmes acts as a means of verification of the compliance of the programme with the Standards, and as a catalyst for improvement, while opening new perspectives towards the international standing of the awarded degrees. Both academic units and institutions must consistently consider the conclusions and the recommendations submitted by the panels of experts for the continuous improvement of the programme.

Relevant documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

Findings:
The Department started activities in the academic year 2019-2020, therefore it is finishing only its third year of operation. There has been no evaluation of the departmental operations so far. As a result, the work conducted by the current panel can hardly be called "accreditation" as there are no recommendations of a previous evaluation panel on which to base such an accreditation. Rather, it is a hybrid operation in which evaluation and accreditation are conducted simultaneously.

Analysis:

There has been no evaluation of the departmental operations so far, nevertheless, the findings of the present panel as described in the 12 principles of this report could be used as the basis for a future accreditation.

Conclusions:
The EEAP feels that the Department has put in place the necessary tools for being accredited/evaluated and the staff of the Department seems to be well aware of the value of such procedures.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

None.

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

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

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

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

Relevant documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

Findings:
The department has put in place a detailed procedure to implement the transition from TEI to the department as smooth as possible. The approach followed is quite sensible and consists of three activities: (1) let the old TEI run until its current students graduate then stop its operation (2) create correspondences between courses offered by the department and courses offered by the TEI and (3) allow students from TEI to continue their studies in the department for those students who wish to do so.

Analysis:

In addition to the burden of coping with the integration of TEI, the Department is facing several difficulties of its own in order to achieve smooth operation within the institution, such as

setting up an appropriate teaching environment (teaching rooms, technical infrastructure, secretarial support and the like).

Conclusions:

The department has performed very well in setting up its own structure and at the same time preparing and implementing the transition.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R12.1 Continue the efforts to successfully terminate the transition while intensifying the efforts for improving your own teaching and research environment.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

- The process of smooth merging of the two TEI departments into the new university department
- The student-staff relationship is congenial, constructive, and productive.

II. Areas of Weakness

- Lack of significant faculty research production accompanied by an adopted list of recommended journals for publication and criteria of faculty research evaluation
- Inadequate design of the departmental website
- Comparing document B5, Four Year Business Plan and document with B9, Department Goal Setting, it appears that the goals presented in document B9 are insufficient (they could be expanded, enhanced, and quantified as described in the four-year business plan).

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- The Department should embark on an on-going documentation and compilation of key, repeatable operating procedures and processes which are deemed to be of importance, in an easy-to-follow graphical form, such as a flow chart. Such a collection of documents would standardize these procedures and serve as a "standards manual" that can be followed to ensure consistency of implementation (execution).
- Establish a formalized "ADVISORY BOARD" involving Faculty, external stakeholders, and alumni to improve interaction and communications to explore common interests and mutual benefits.
- Support the eventual creation of an alumni society by providing resources such as internet access and support from the Career office.
- Provide specialist training in soft skills, including CV creation, mock interviews to facilitate student interviews in their attempts to seek employment.
- Departmental Quality Goal Setting, including associated KPIs, should be expanded.
- The Department in cooperation with other departments should develop a list of courses in English that will facilitate full semester ERASMUS+ mobility.
- Develop and expand the cooperation with other departments, in particular with Computer Science/Computer Engineering, to the extent that they have overlapping interests.

IV.   Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: **3 and 12.**

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **2, 4, 5, 7, 10, and 11.**

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are: **1, 6, 8, and 9.**

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

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

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname   **Signature**

1. **Professor Spyros Economides (Chair)**
    California State University, East Bay, USA

2. **Professor Emeritus Nicolas Spyratos**
    University of Paris-Saclay, France

3. **Professor Costas Iliopoulos**
    King's College London, UK

4. **Ms Despina Liotsaki**
    Athens University of Economics and Business