10.1 Progress report of the academic unit on the response to the recommendations included in the last Accreditation Report

The Undergraduate Program at the School of Medicine underwent accreditation assessment by esteemed evaluators from abroad in March 2019. The outcome was full compliance with all principles 1-10. A similar external evaluation took place in November 2013, mirroring the scope of the recent accreditation process.
The accreditation committee acknowledged that the Department was on the right path, expressing satisfaction with the consistent interaction observed among all participants during both evaluations. Specifically, they noted the high level of cooperation from Department representatives, their readiness to address all inquiries openly, and their eagerness to consider and improve upon raised points. The staff members recognize the significance of external reviews in enhancing the Department's performance.
One of the Department's key strengths lies in its infrastructure, its close proximity to the university hospital and other university departments, fostering multidisciplinary research. Furthermore, the Department benefits from strong support and commitment from the University. Additional strengths include the excellence of the staff leading preclinical courses and labs, facilitating high-quality research and collaboration with international institutions, particularly in Europe and the USA. The Committee recommended reinforcing this strength by recruiting new faculty members with significant experience from foreign institutions.
Another notable strength is the clinical component of the Medical Department, comprising highly experienced tertiary-level physicians. The Committee highlighted the positive collaboration between academic and National Health System physicians, facilitating their involvement in various academic activities, especially in clinical student teaching.
While strengths were recognized, the Committee also identified weaknesses requiring attention, with individual recommendations provided for each area. A detailed response to the previous evaluation is provided point-by-point**.**

Principle 1
-Future revisions of the programme could include a mechanism to quantitatively monitor impact of implemented changes.¨
-Introduction of a monitoring system based on clear action metrics that provides a detailed list of issues, identified actions agreed and impact. This should be available through the General Assembly minutes.
-The Department should strongly consider introducing a mandatory peer observation scheme to complement existing evaluation by students.

Answers
-In recent years, the undergraduate program has been monitored, and necessary interventions have been made through the annual review process of the Undergraduate Program curriculum. Efforts have been made to rationalize the core knowledge provided in core courses by addressing issues of content overlap and reducing students' educational workload. The organization of the teaching schedule with clear prerequisites for knowledge has been established. Furthermore, efforts are being made in several courses to engage students more effectively in the process of offering, receiving, and assimilating knowledge through group work exercises. Unfortunately, this activity is seriously hindered by the continuously increasing and excessive numbers of students admitted each year, coupled with the simultaneous decrease in the Department's faculty members. This situation appears to significantly restrict and impact elective courses, where the number of students is now limited and manageable.

The Internal Evaluation Group (I.E.G.) of the Department, the Undergraduate Program monitoring committee, and the Department Assembly have established the procedure for reviewing a portion of the UPS, which includes the following steps:

1. Discussion and proposal of the Undergraduate Program monitoring committee to the I.E.G.
2. Approval by the I.E.G.
3. Validation by the Department Assembly

These procedures are based on the guidelines of the Quality Assurance Unit (Q.A.U.) and are in accordance with Quality Assurance Standards (Q.A.S.), structured based on the forms accompanying each course in both Greek and English, and compatible with the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS).
The I.E.G. of the Department is responsible for overseeing the processes, as provided by Q.A.S. and the regulations of the University. The evaluation system is uniform for the entire University of Patras.

-There is no documented procedure for evaluating the outcome of the changes, only the assessment of students and the success rate in examinations.
Student evaluations of instructors have come under significant scrutiny because of their tendency the recent years. To motivate students to complete end-of-course evaluations and to provide useful feedback through those evaluations, it is recommended instructors talk with their students about the importance of course evaluations and how these evaluations are used. Also explain that student evaluations matter, that they use them to improve their teaching, encouraging them to give feedback that is specific to their teaching practices.
The following factors significantly contributed to improvement of teaching as measured by student evaluations: Engaging in active and practical learning that emphasizes the relevance of course material to students. Creating the opportunity for significant teacher/student interactions and conferences that allow instructors to connect with students. Emphasizing learning outcomes and setting high expectations. Revisions and improvements to how student learning is assessed.

Principle 2
-Attendance to courses should be a quality criterion and emphasis and further support should be given to improve courses that fail to attract high number of students.
-There should be a more structured way to systematically encourage research training opportunities and to involve a higher number of undergraduate students in research projects.
-There should be a mechanism to compare the effectiveness or the revision of the curriculum with other Departments/Schools of Medicine within Greece or elsewhere. In addition, periodical evaluation should include external members from other Departments/Schools both in Greece and abroad.

Answer
-It is well known that attending class leads to improved student outcomes. The increase of the attendance rate of students has been of particular concern to the staff members, and the Undergraduate Program Monitoring Committee. It has been possible in several courses that were not compulsory to increase the attendance rate by creating a positive classroom environment and explaining the value of attendance particularly in first-years students and finding ways to personalize contents well as including exam questions based on class content.
-Students are strongly encouraged to participate in research activities on a voluntary basis. However the incorporation of research training into undergraduate medical curricula only

exists in elective modules. While initially students are very willing, the need to prepare themselves properly for the future demands of the medical profession and the relatively heavy learning burden in later years discourages participation in research procedures. However, at the national conference of student associations, an increasing number of students from Patras are participating in research collaborations.
-The undergraduate curriculum of the different medical schools in the country differs. Since 2003, our school has been following a program based on integrated teaching taught in two semesters between preclinical and clinical years, as well as incorporating problem based learning into teaching. To our knowledge this model has been attempted to be followed by other medical schools. The comparison between the expected educational objectives in medical schools is something that should primarily concern the authorities of the Ministry of Health and the creation of appropriate institutional procedures.
Our school also considers that any external evaluation from Greece or abroad is a very useful tool for improving the quality of medical education.

Principle 3
-Implementation of the OSCE system is strongly recommended.
-Devise a plan to improve the student/academic staff ratio to maintain effectiveness and quality of teaching.

Answers
-In our school, the implementation of OSCE-type exams has begun, after a committee was formed for the design and conduct of the respective exams. However, due to the COVID epidemic and distance learning for at least two years, the continuation of these exams was not possible. Another negative factor is the reduction in members of the teaching staff and consequently the corresponding increase in students per year. The school is committed to integrating the OSCE examination into two undergraduate courses, surgery and internal medicine.
-The actions to improve the teacher/student ratio concern the administration of the University of Patras and the central leadership of the Ministry of Education. Almost every year, the school president requests, through the senate, an increase in the number of teaching staff members, but what they managed to achieve was only the announcement of positions for retired professors.

Principle 4
-The number of admitted students exceeds the educational capacity of the Department and may lead to suboptimal training of the students. It is recommended that the Department and the relevant authorities apply strict and realistic targets for student admission.

Answer
-Repeatedly the medical department has requested through the university authorities to the ministry of education to reduce the number of students admitted to the Medical School but the final number of students is determined by the ministry.

Principle 5
-The University management and the Department are aware of the need to bring new faculty with an international recognition compatible with the outward look and the international perspective of the Department.
-The establishment of an "Office of education" is recommended. Such an office can be helpful in improving the teaching skills of the faculty.

-Mechanisms should be introduced for conflict management resolution among faculty members or between faculty and students. In addition, mechanisms should be introduced to address issues of sexual harassment.

Answers
-In recent years, new members of the teaching staff with recognized work in Greece and abroad have been hired to fill the positions vacated by retiring members, as evidenced by their CVs and publications.
-The "Teaching and Learning Support Center" of the University of Patras provides support for teaching and learning to anyone interested in upgrading their teaching work and staying informed about contemporary trends in university pedagogy.
The purpose of the Center's operation is to provide guidance, advice, and tools to members of the teaching staff for the effective design, teaching, and evaluation of their courses, as well as to improve teaching methods by developing modern and effective educational activities, utilizing ICT in teaching university courses, in order to create learning environments that facilitate and support learning.
-Conflict resolution mechanisms are defined by the regulations of the Institution and have been fully adopted by the School of Medicine

Principle 7
Although the Department stays in touch with successful graduates who work abroad, a more formal way of communication with all alumni can greatly increase visibility, networking and fund-raising efforts.

Answer
There is a significant effort, particularly through social networks, to maintain contact with alumni and increase the number of participants in the alumni group, which now stands at 172

Principle 9
Bedside manners and professional and social behavior are key aspects of medical student training. More emphasis should be given on this issue in future revisions of the curriculum.

Answer
The course "Introduction to Medical Care-Prevention-Primary Health Care-First Aid" in the first semester aims to initially familiarize students with and understand topics of general interest related to the clinical practice of Medicine. The classes are conducted by clinical physicians, in amphitheaters, and cover topics such as the organization of medical education, issues in clinical practice, and the principles governing it, the modern version of the 'Hippocratic Oath', differences in the management of patients with acute or chronic diseases, differences characterizing female patients and pediatric patients.
Additionally, it addresses modern healthcare systems and the healthcare system in Greece, the importance of prevention in medicine, the issue of blood transfusions and organ transplants, indications and problems during transfusion, problems and the approach to end-stage patients, and finally, the ethical and moral principles governing medicine

Principle 10
In future evaluations, the Department in agreement with ADIP should provide documents that respond point-by-point to the comments of the previous evaluation.