



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



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Accreditation Report for the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS)

Institution: University of Patras

Date: 26 May 2024

Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the **Internal Quality Assurance System** {IQAS} of the **University of Patras** for the purposes of granting accreditation.

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PART A: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW

I. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the **Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS)** of the University of Patras comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

1. EFSTATHIADES ANDREAS (Chair)

European University Cyprus

2. POLITIS CHRISTOS

Department of Networks and Digital Media, School of Computer Science and Mathematics, Faculty of Science, Engineering and Computing, Kingston University

3. SALONITIS KONSTANTINOS

Cranfield University

4. PROTONOTARIOU ELISAVET

Athens University of Economics and Business

5. MASTROGIANNAKIS STYLIANOS

Economic Chamber of Greece

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

HAHE put together the panel, which consisted of the individuals named at the front of this report, who are the authors. The visit was held on campus on May 20th, 21st, and 22nd, 2024. In preparation for this meeting, EEAP considered all the relevant documentation required for accreditation, which is uploaded on the ETHAE platform. Additional information requested by EEAP has been provided on time.

Prior to the visit, the EEAP read all the provided material. The EEAP met on the afternoon of the 20th of May to allocate tasks and identify areas that need further attention. Overall, the information provided, and the team's preparedness were sufficient to conduct a thorough review of the Internal Quality Assurance System and to provide a fair view of the degree to which it meets the accreditation requirements.

The visit took place on campus over three days, during which the EEAP met with representatives from the following groups as follows:

- On the first day (20th of May), with the university's Rector and Vice Rector.
- On the 2nd day (21st of May) with the following groups:
 - o The Quality Assurance Unit (QAU/MODIP)
 - o The Internal Evaluation Groups (IEG/ OMEA) members
 - o The faculty members
 - o The undergraduate students
 - o The postgraduate students
- On the 3rd day (22nd of May), with the following groups:
 - o The Heads of administrative units
 - o The external stakeholders
 - o The alumni
 - o The Quality Assurance Unit (QAU/MODIP)

The closure meeting occurred with the Rector and the Vice-

Rector/ President of (MODIP) on the 3rd day.

The EEAP toured the Library, the facilities of the Civil Engineering department, and the MODIP offices.

Overall, the EEAP was greeted warmly, and the University team was found to be knowledgeable and well-prepared.

III. Institution Profile

The University of Patras was founded on November 11, 1964, as a self-governing Legal Entity of Public Law within the framework of the country's Administrative Development Program. Its Vision was to be a university that cultivates the spirit of international cooperation and scientific progress. Its inauguration was held on November 30, 1966.

The University was initially housed in a building granted by the Organization of School Buildings in the centre of Patras. In 1968, approximately 2,500 acres in Rio, 8 km from the centre of Patras, were chosen to establish the Campus.

On January 9, 1965, the administration of the University was assigned to a five-member Steering Committee. This committee's task was to develop the university's Schools and Departments and its administrative and management bodies.

The Governing Committee ceased to exercise its duties in October 1974, when the University Authorities and the first Senate of the University were elected.

The university's evolutionary course and distinguished presence in the domestic and international scientific arena justifies the vision and initial goals of its establishment. In 2013 and 2019, the University of Western Greece and the Technological Educational Institute (TEI) of Western Greece were merged with the University of Patras.

Today, the University of Patras comprises 7 Schools with 31 Departments. It offers 36 Undergraduate, 57 Postgraduate (6 Bi-institutional, 1 Interstate, 2 Erasmus Mundus), and 30 PhD Programs.

It is one of the biggest universities in Greece, offering courses on 3 campuses (Patras, Agrinio, and Messolonghi), with 50,000 active undergraduate students, 1,990 postgraduate students and 2,186 PhD candidates. It operates 180 Research Laboratories and 17 university Clinics.

The schools and departments have 691 faculty members and 237 Special Teaching Personnel. They are supported by 405 permanent administration staff and 1702 staff recruited on a contract basis.

As internal and external evaluations highlight, the University of Patras presents significant research activity.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

Principle 1: STRATEGY, QUALITY POLICY AND TARGET SETTING OF THE INSTITUTION

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD DEVELOP A FOUR-YEAR STRATEGY, WITHIN WHICH THE QUALITY ASSURANCE STRATEGY IS INCLUDED. THE QUALITY ASSURANCE STRATEGY IS SPECIFIED THROUGH THE QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY, WHICH SETS OUT THE PRINCIPLES OF THE OPERATION OF THE IQAS AND AIMS AT THE CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT OF THE SYSTEM. THE QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY IS SPECIFIED THROUGH THE ANNUAL QUALITY TARGET SETTING WHICH EXTENDS TO ALL ASPECTS AND DIMENSIONS OF THE INSTITUTION'S OPERATION AND ACTIVITIES.

The Institution's strategy provides the general guidelines for the actions to be implemented within the specific forthcoming period. The strategic goals for quality assurance constitute one of the main pillars of the Institution's strategy. These goals are set out and specified following to analysis of relevant parameters and quality indicators. The quality assurance strategy includes the quality assurance policy as a specific document.

The quality assurance policy is the guiding document which sets the operating principles of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS), the principles for the continuous improvement of the Institution, as well as the Institution's obligation for public accountability. It supports the development of a quality culture, according to which, all internal stakeholders assume responsibility for quality and engage in quality assurance. This policy has a formal status and is publicly available.

The quality assurance policy is implemented through:

- the commitment for compliance with the laws and regulations that govern the Institution;*
- the establishment, review, redesign, and redefinition of quality assurance objectives, that are fully in line with the institutional strategy*

This policy mainly supports:

- the organization of the internal quality assurance system;*
- the Institution's leadership, departments and other organizational units, individual staff members and students to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance;*
- the integrity of academic principles and ethics, guarding against discriminations, and encouragement of external stakeholders to be involved in quality assurance;*
- the continuous improvement of learning and teaching, research and innovation;*
- the quality assurance of the programmes and their alignment with the relevant HAHE Standards;*
- the effective organisation of services and the development and maintenance of infrastructure;*
- the allocation and effective management of the necessary resources for the operation of the Institution;*
- the development and rational allocation of human resources*

The way in which this policy is designed, approved, implemented, monitored, and revised constitutes one of the processes of the internal quality assurance system.

For the implementation of the quality assurance policy, an annual quality target-setting (using the SMART methodology) and a specific action plan for the achievement of the targets are drafted. The quality targeting includes all annual goals required for addressing weaknesses and improving the parameters of the Institution's teaching, research, and administrative work, according to the

Documentation/Annexes

El.1 Strategic planning of the Institution (including the quality assurance strategy) El.2 Quality

assurance policy of the Institution in liaison with the strategy

El.3 Quality Targeting of the Institution (SMART), as implementation of the strategy and policy

Institution compliance

I. Findings

The University of Patras demonstrates a strong commitment to quality assurance and continuous improvement, as evidenced by its well-defined strategic plan for 2023-2027. This plan includes a SWOT analysis, which identifies the university's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats and outlines eight strategic priorities for the coming years. The university has also developed a detailed quality policy that outlines its commitment to quality and the steps it will take to achieve its quality goals. The policy is accompanied by specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timely goals for various aspects of the university's operations. These goals are monitored using key performance indicators (KPIs), regularly reviewed and updated to ensure they remain relevant and effective.

II. Analysis

The University of Patras has a well-defined institutional strategy for the current period (2023-2027). The strategy includes a SWOT analysis documented with relevant data and indicators. Quality assurance is identified as a distinct strategic axis within this strategy. The strategic plan outlines the most appropriate strategy for the institution based on the SWOT analysis. Strategic goals are formulated for each activity area, ensuring a comprehensive approach to quality enhancement. The quality assurance strategy aims to enhance quality in specific areas by rectifying identified weaknesses. It is directly linked to the institution's developmental strategy, as evidenced by its inclusion as a distinct strategic axis in the strategic plan.

Interviews with QAU, representatives of OMEA and academic staff indicate that the university has developed a quality culture, especially in the administrative and financial domains. This is less evidence in the student populations as there is no representation of the above committees of the University. The Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) assumes full responsibility for internal quality assurance and fostering this culture within the institution without delegating its responsibilities to third parties. The quality policy includes key elements that address mitigating weaknesses and enhancing the institution's operations. It also specifically addresses improving the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS).

Discussions with the University show commitment to quality assurance and the existence of a well-defined quality policy, suggesting that the policy is likely being implemented, albeit at a slower pace. This needs to be monitored to ensure the uniform and timely implementation of the quality policy.

The quality assurance policy is aligned with the quality strategy, as the University is committed to continuous improvement and achieving excellence in education, research, and administration. The quality goals are paired with suitable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), as evidenced by the detailed list of KPIs provided by QAU. These goals are monitored, updated, and communicated through various channels, including the University's information system (PSDIP) and regular reports. Monitoring KPIs is feasible over the years, as demonstrated by the data collected and analysed by the University's information system (PSDIP). The KPIs allow for comparability of data, as they are standardised and tracked over time. The KPIs used are considered acceptable in the context of established KPIs for higher education, compared with similar ones used abroad (in the UK, for instance).

The EEAP could not evidence how the KPIs have evolved over the past five years. However, the document "Progress Report of the IQAS for 5 years " details the University's progress on various quality assurance goals, suggesting that the KPIs have been used to track and evaluate the University's performance over time.

The quality goal-setting process at UPAT supports achieving the set goals through clearly defined actions, evidenced during the institutional visit by EE AP.

III. Conclusions

EEAP concluded that the university is compliant with regard to Principle 1, though the Panel's recommendations should be addressed.

Panel Judgement

Principle 1: STRATEGY, QUALITY POLICY AND TARGET SETTING OF THE INSTITUTION	
Compliance	X
Partial compliance	
Non-compliance	

Panel Recommendations

RI. 1: The University should involve the students and external stakeholders in their committees (QAU, OMEA) to ensure their policies' plurality, openness and fairness.

RI. 2: The University should ensure the quality assurance policies are implemented in a timely and uniformly manner across all schools and faculties of the University.

RI. 3: The University should provide further evidence on how the KPIs have evolved

over the past five years across all schools and faculties.

Principle 2: PROGRAMMING AND ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD ENSURE ADEQUATE FUNDING, HUMAN RESOURCES, INFRASTRUCTURE, SERVICES AND SYSTEMS FOR TEACHING, RESEARCH, AND INNOVATION, AS WELL AS FOR THE WHOLE RANGE OF THEIR ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES, FOR THE PURPOSE OF FULFILLING THEIR MISSION AND STRATEGIC GOALS. THE ABOVE RESOURCES ARE PLANNED OVER A FOUR-YEAR HORIZON, ARE LINKED WITH THE STRATEGY AND ARE ALLOCATED IN A RATIONAL MANNER, IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE PERTINENT PROCEDURES. THEIR MANAGEMENT AND MONITORING IS IMPLEMENTED BY MEANS OF INFORMATION SYSTEMS.

Funding

The institution ensures adequate funding to cover not only the overhead and operational costs (regular budget and public investment budget) but also costs related to research, innovation, and development by exploiting external sources of financing. The financial planning and the operation of an effective financial management system constitute necessary tools for the full exploitation of the resources.

The annual public funding of the Institution follow the procedures set out in article 16 of Law 4653/2020 and the relevant ministerial decisions.

The annual budgets for the past five years, the absorption and the main categories of expenditure as well as the amount and sources of the external funding are key elements for the assessment of the principle.

Infrastructure

Based on the requirements and needs arising during its operation, the Institution has determined ways to define, allocate and maintain all the necessary resources to ensure its smooth and proper functioning, i.e. teaching, research and auxiliary facilities, equipment and software, support facilities (cleaning, transportation, communication) et c. The scope of the IQAS should include a suitable managing and monitoring system to safeguard the infrastructure. Compliance with the internal regulations is also necessary.

Working environment

The institution ensures -as far as possible- that the working environment has a positive effect on the performance of all members of the academic community (students and staff). Factors that are taken into consideration towards the creation of such a favourable environment are, among others, the sanitary facilities, the lighting/heating/ventilation system, the cleanliness, and the overall appearance of the premises, etc. The scope of the IQAS should include an appropriate managing and monitoring system to promote a favourable working environment and to ensure compliance with the existing provisions.

Documentation/Annexes

E2.1 Annual planning and allocation of funding from all available sources for the next 4 years, or Programme Agreement of the Institution, if applicable

E2.2 Internal rules for the allocation and distribution of the financial and human resources to the academic units and the central services of the Institution

E2.3 Internal evaluation by the QAU of the resources, according to the relevant NISQA indicators and the performance indicators of the Institution

E2.4 Overview of the information systems for the management and monitoring of the financial and human resources of the Institution

Institution compliance

I. Findings

The University of Patras has a well-defined procedure for identifying and planning the necessary resources to support its academic activities. The University annually plans for funding, human resources, infrastructure, services, and systems over four years. An effective information system is in place to manage and monitor the allocation of these resources, ensuring transparency and account ability. UPAT has secured funding from external sources to improve its facilities and has made significant progress in addressing accessibility issues. The University has also revised its IQAS to include a process for allocating and managing infrastructure and services.

II. Analysis

The necessary resources (funding, human resources, infrastructure, services, and systems) are identified and planned through a well-defined procedure that involves annual planning for all four types of resources over a four-year time frame. The University has an effective information system for allocating, managing, and monitoring all resources. The allocation of resources among academic and other units is based on a set of criteria considered effective in ensuring the fair and equitable distribution of resources. Based on the available data and indicators. The KPIs related to average annual total funding per student, student-staff ratio, and average annual number of students per classroom are within acceptable ranges, indicating that the University has sufficient resources to support its academic activities. The suitability of the working environment is demonstrated through various indicators, including the availability of adequate facilities, equipment, and resources and the implementation of health and safety measures. The EEAP considers the procedure for monitoring the suitability of the working environment to be effective, as it includes regular inspections and assessments of the University's facilities and working conditions. The external evaluation of the University's resources by EEAP reveals some areas for improvement. The University relies heavily on public funding, and there has been a

significant decrease in funding from international organisations in recent years. Additionally, there are fluctuations in spending on student meals, housing, and infrastructure maintenance, which raise questions about the University's budgeting and resource allocation processes.

III. Conclusions

EEAP concluded that the university is compliant with regard to Principle 2, though the Panel's recommendations should be addressed.

Panel judgement

Principle 2: PROGRAMMING AND ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES	
2.1 Funding	
Compliance	
Partial compliance	X
Non-compliance	
2.2 Infrastructure	
Compliance	X
Partial compliance	
Non-compliance	
2.3 Working Environment	
Compliance	X
Partial compliance	
Non-compliance	
2.4 Human Resources	
Compliance	X
Partial compliance	
Non-compliance	

Principle 2: PROGRAMMING AND ALLOCATION OF RESOURCES	
(overall)	
Compliance	X
Partial compliance	
Non-compliance	

Panel Recommendations

R2.1: The University should diversify funding sources by reducing its reliance on public funding and mitigating the impact of fluctuations in external funding. This can be done by more actively and aggressively involving external stakeholders and alumni in its policies and committees and seeking funding and collaborations with them.

Principle 3: STRUCTURE, ORGANISATION AND OPERATION OF THE IQAS

THE IQAS INCLUDES ALL NECESSARY PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES FOR THE COMPLIANCE OF ALL THE INSTITUTION'S ACADEMIC STRUCTURES, ACTIVITIES AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES WITH THE QUALITY STANDARDS. THE QAU IS THE COMPETENT UNIT FOR THE ORGANISATION AND OPERATION OF THE IQAS AND HAS THE REQUIRED FUNCTIONAL INDEPENDENCE AND OPERATIONAL CAPACITY FOR THE EFFECTIVE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE IQAS, AS WELL AS FOR ITS COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRESENT STANDARDS.

The key goal of the internal quality assurance system (IQAS) is the development, effective operation and continuous improvement of the whole range of the Institution's activities, and particularly, of teaching, research, innovation, governance and relevant services, according to the international practices - especially those of the European Higher Education Area - and the HAHE principles and guidelines described in these Standards.

Structure and organization

In each Institution, the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) holds the responsibility for the administration and management of the IQAS. The QAU is set up according to the existing legislative framework and is responsible for:

- the development of specialised policy, strategy and relevant processes towards the continuous improvement of the quality of the Institution's work and provisions;
- the organisation, operation and continuous improvement of the Institutions' internal quality assurance system;
- the coordination and support of the evaluation process of the Institution's academic units and other services, and
- the support of the external evaluation and accreditation process of the Institution's programmes and internal quality assurance system in the context of the HAHE principles and guidelines.

The Institution's IQAS and its implementation processes are determined by the decisions of the competent bodies, as provided by the law, and are published in the Government's Gazette, as well as on the Institution's website. The above are reviewed every five years, at the latest.

To achieve the above goals, the QAU collaborates with the HAHE, develops and maintains a management information system to store the quality data, which are periodically submitted to the HAHE, according to the latter's instructions. The QAU is responsible for the systematic monitoring of the evaluation process and for the publication of evaluation - related procedures and their results on the Institution's website.

The QAU structure has been approved by the Institutions' competent bodies, as provided by the law, while all competences accruing from this structure are clearly defined.

The QAU is staffed by a sufficient number of permanent personnel, so as that the operational needs of the IQAS are completely met. The administrative officer of the QAU

has comprehensive updating and knowledge about the implementation of its operations and activities.

Operation

The institution takes action for the design, establishment, implementation, audit and maintenance of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS), taking into account the requirements of the Standards, while making any necessary amendments to ensure fitness to achieve its aims.

The above actions include:

- o the provision of all necessary processes and procedures for the successful operation of the IQAS, as well as the participation of all parties involved, across the Institution. The Institution's areas of activity can constitute the IQAS processes, e.g. teaching, research and innovation, governance, services etc. An IQAS process is an area of activity including data input, data processing and outputs. A procedure defines the way an action is implemented and includes a course of stages or steps, e.g. the curriculum design procedure;
- o the determination of how the IQAS procedures/ processes are audited, measured and assessed, and how they interact;
- o provision of all necessary resources to enable the IQAS implementation.

Documents

The IQAS documentation includes, among other things, a series of key documents demonstrating its structure and organisation, and the Quality Manual, which describes how the requirements of the Standards are met.

The Annexes of the Quality Manual include:

- o the Quality Policy and the Quality Assurance Objectives;
- o the necessary written Procedures, along with the entailed forms;
- o the necessary Guides, External Documents (e.g. pertinent legislation), as well as any other supporting data;
- o the standing organisational structure of the QAU, with a detailed description of the competences, the required qualifications and the goals for each post. The organisational chart is structured in a manner that ensures that the IQAS organisational requirements are fully and properly met.

Documentation

E3.1 Government Gazette for the approval, structure, and operation of the IQAS and the QAU

E3.2 Updated IQAS Quality Manual (including the QAU organisational structure - job descriptions, tasks, skills)

E3.3 QAU Internal Regulation

Institution compliance

I. Findings

The institution's Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) has been established per the existing legislative framework and the provisions of HAHE. The institution's updated IQAS and its implementation processes were determined by decisions of the appropriate institutional competent bodies (the Senate), as provided by the law. They were published in the Government Gazette on February 15th, 2024 (no **8801**).

QAU is headed by the Vice-Rector of Academic and International Affairs. It comprises five experienced academic staff members (who, in

most cases, served in the departmental Internal Evaluation Groups - OMEAs - for many years) and representatives from special scientific personnel, laboratory teaching staff, special technical laboratory staff, and administrative staff. There is provision for student representatives, although at the time of compiling the report, the university's student body had yet to appoint a representative. The QAU is supported by four administrative members of staff.

The proposal, dated December 2023 and submitted for approval, details the structure, organisation, and operation of the updated IQAS.

Several University support units have certified their quality systems using ISO. This is a great practice.

II. Analysis

During the visit, the EEAP was presented with all required evidence on the effectiveness of the structure put in place for managing quality at the institutional level. The EEAP confirms that the Quality Manual includes all the necessary processes and procedures for the institution's compliance with the Standards.

The EEAP was also provided with samples of standardised forms, highlighting that the procedures were implemented as expected.

The QAU is structured according to Law 4957/2022, art. 215, but not fully. There is no representation from the visiting staff and employed researchers, which is not in compliance with what is expected by the relevant law. Although there is a provision for student s' representation, it was clarified during the visits that the student unions have not appointed representatives.

The QAU is adequately staff ed. During the discussions with the administrative support staff of QAU, it was evident that the workload is high, and it would be suggested that an additional staff member be appointed in the support unit. Discussions highlighted that all staff members have adequate skills and competencies, with a clear job description and task allocation.

III. Conclusions

EEAP concluded that the University is compliant with regard to Principle 3, though the Panel's recommendations should be addressed.

Panel judgement

Principle 3: STRUCTURE, ORGANISATION AND OPERATION OF THE IQAS	
Compliance	X
Partial compliance	
Non-compliance	

Panel Recommendations

R3.1 The student body be represented in QUA. The University needs to support student engagement in the quality system.

R3.2 The QAU must include a representation of visiting staff and employed researchers. R3.3 QAU admin team would benefit from an additional member of staff.

Principle 4: SELF- ASSESSMENT

THE INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM CONDUCTS INTERNAL EVALUATION OF THE WHOLE RANGE OF ACADEMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE ACTIVITIES OF THE INSTITUTION, AS WELL AS ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE SYSTEM, TO IDENTIFY ANY OVERSIGHTS, DEFICIENCIES OR DISCREPANCIES. CORRECTIVE ACTIONS AND IMPROVEMENTS ARE PROPOSED TOWARDS THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE QUALITY AND STRATEGIC GOALS. DURING THE SELF- ASSESSMENT, THE EFFECTIVE INTERNAL COMMUNICATION WITH THE INTERNAL AS WELL AS THE EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS IS ENSURED.

The QAU conducts, on an annual basis, a self-assessment of the IQAS, following the written procedure provided for each area of activity, which is implemented by a certain academic or administrative unit, as appropriate. The procedure determines the timing, the participants, the data under consideration, and the expected outcomes. The self-assessment aims at a final estimation of the suitability of the IQAS in force, as well as at basing decisions concerning the necessary remedial or precautionary actions for improvement.

The data considered in the context of the self-assessment of a programme may, for example, include:

- *students performance;*
- *feedback from students / teaching staff;*
- *assessment of learning outcomes;*
- *graduation rates;*
- *feedback from the evaluation of the facilities/ learning environment ;*
- *report of any remedial or precautionary actions undertaken ;*
- *suggestions for improvement.*

The outcomes of the self-assessment are recorded in internal reports drawn by the QAU. The reports identify any areas of deviation or non-compliance with the Standards and are communicated to the interested parties (if appropriate). The Institution's resolutions concerning any modification, compliance, or enhancement of the IQAS operation are made in the context of the annual IQAS review and might include actions related to:

- *the upgrade of the IQAS and the pertinent processes;*
- *the upgrade of the services offered to the students;*
- *the reallocation of resources;*
- *the introduction of new quality goals, etc.*

The outcomes of the self-assessment are recorded and, along with the source data, are archived as quality files.

A special procedure is followed for the compliance check of newly launched programmes (of all three cycles), or programmes that are to be revised shortly, prior to the institutional approval of the programmes.

Documentation

E4.1 Minutes and other documents and relevant correspondence regarding the annual internal evaluation of the IQAS by the QAU

E4.2 Results of the last annual internal evaluation of the IQAS by the QAU, and the relevant minutes and documentation

E4.3 Correspondence and other actions (workshops, meetings) for collecting feedback from the external stakeholders

Institution compliance

I. Findings

The University's Quality Policy was revised by QAU's proposal and approved by the Senate meeting (10.3.2022) due to the merger of TEI of Western Greece. The Lifelong Learning Centre (KEDIBIM) is internally evaluated as part of the university's quality assurance procedure s. Furthermore, the application of the International Standards ISO 9001:2015 and ISO 37001 :2015 is used in the function of ELKE for transparency. QUA uses a central information system - resCom- which is part of project finance and administrative management.

The QAU follows a well-processed practice of self-assessment, which is well described in the manual for each activity with all processes. The IQAS is annually reviewed by QAU, which issues the annual report with the results of the internal evaluation - review where there are possible deviations from the standards.

The University takes all HAHE KPIs and generates measurable and comparative quality indicators tailored to their needs.

The University appears to put significant effort into continuous improvement of its quality policies, especially after the merger of the former TEI of Western Greece, which now has 32 Departments instead of the original 24.

II. Analysis

There is sufficient evidence that the University of Patras applies the Quality Assurance System with the continuous support of QAU in close cooperation with OMEA of all Academic Units and administration. Input from industry is rather informal.

Students participate in the internal Evaluation of each course through electronic questionnaires. Following the meetings with QAU and academic staff, the level of student participation was deemed low. Students are invited to committee meetings, but they do not participate. EEAP, during the meetings with academic members, students, and graduates, observed a friendly and mutually respectful culture, which helps the effective

application of the QA.

The university uses many information systems, mostly because it merged with schools from the Technological Institute of Western Greece in 2019. Such systems do not interface with each other.

III. Conclusions

EEAP concluded that the University is compliant with regard to Principle 4, though the Panel's recommendations should be addressed.

Panel judgement

Principle 4: SELF-ASSESSMENT	
Compliance	X
Partial compliance	
Non-compliance	

Panel Recommendations

R4.1: The University is encouraged to enhance the participation of external stakeholders in their processes and policies.

R4. 2: Integration of the various legacy Information Systems into one University-wide system.

Principle 5: COLLECTION OF QUALITY DATA: MEASURING, ANALYSIS, AND IMPROVEMENT

INSTITUTIONS ARE FULLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND USE OF INFORMATION IN AN INTEGRATED, FUNCTIONAL AND READILY ACCESSIBLE MANNER, THROUGH INFORMATION SYSTEMS, AIMING AT THE EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF THE QUALITY DATA RELATED TO TEACHING, RESEARCH AND OTHER ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES, AS WELL AS THOSE RELATED TO THEIR ADMINISTRATIVE OPERATION.

The QAU should establish and operate an information system to manage the data required for the implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System.

The QAU measures and monitors the performance of the various activities of the Institution, through appropriate procedures established in the context of the IQAS structure and assesses their level of effectiveness. The measuring and monitoring is conducted on a basis of indicators and data provided by the HAHE in the pertinent guidelines and forms, which are part of the National Information System for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (NISQA). These measurements may concern: the size of the student body, the size of the teaching and administrative staff, the infrastructure, the structural components of the curricula, students' performance, research activity performance, financial data, feedback on student and faculty satisfaction surveys, data related to the teaching and research activity services, infrastructure, etc.

The QAU makes use of the figures and presents the results for consideration using statistical analysis. Outcomes are displayed through histograms and charts. This sort of information is used by the Institution for decision making, at all levels, pursuing improvement, as well as for setting, monitoring, assessing and reviewing the Institution's strategic and operational goals.

Institutions are under an obligation to provide or transfer data (through the QAU) to the HAHE, for the purposes of quality assurance, and monitoring of their strategy and funding.

Documentation

ES.1 Reports from the National Information System for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (NISQA) and accompanying assessment report by the QAU

ES. 2 Description of the functions of the QAU information system

ES.3 Sample of fully completed questionnaire of satisfaction surveys addressed to the teaching and the administrative staff

ES.4 QAU report on the utilisation of the data collected from the QAU information system (internal evaluation, quality targeting, etc.)

Institution compliance

I. Findings

QAU manages the collection of quality data, their analysis, and their use for continuous improvement at the institutional level. Data is fed to QAU from the departmental Internal Evaluation Groups - OMEAs. Such data is collected per course delivered in each department and the course instructor. The students' participation in the filling in the surveys is

limited.

At the same time, the university has self-funded the development of data collection tools, such as the "Alexandria", for collecting data from bibliographic data bases; such tools are managed centrally by QAU, but access is also given to OMEAs. These additional data are used for performance measurement. QAU provided a demonstration of the tools that were developed aforementioned. The data collected cover all expected areas, namely the student body, teaching methods, teaching and administrative staff, innovation, infrastructure, and finance.

The university uses various collection methods, such as electronic questionnaires and automated algorithms for collecting information and data from secondary sources (such as Scopus and Google Scholar). Data related to courses are collected at the end of each semester, and performance-related metrics are collected annually.

II. Analysis

The students' participation in the feedback surveys is rather limited, and as reported by the university staff, the participation ratio was reduced once the university moved to paperless/online surveys. This is typical for student surveys globally, although in the case of the University of Patras (and other Greek universities), the oversubscription to courses with students who do not attend the lectures can result in distorted percentages.

The university was not able to present how the data are analysed and used for decision-making. A standardised dashboard should be developed for continuous monitoring of the data and highlight the process for feeding such information to the relevant decision-making boards.

III. Conclusions

EEAP concluded that the university is partially compliant with regards to Principle 5, with the main weaknesses focused on the analysis of data.

Panel judgement

Principle 5: COLLECTION OF QUALITY DATA:	
MEASURING	ANALYSIS AND
Compliance	
Partial compliance	X
Non-compliance	

Panel Recommendations

RS.1 Standardize the analysis of the data QAU collects.

RS. 2 Develop a dashboard for monitoring key performance indicators.
Principle 6: PUBLIC INFORMATION

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD PUBLISH INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR TEACHING AND ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES IN A DIRECT AND ACCESSIBLE MANNER. ALL PERTINENT INFORMATION THAT APPEARS IN THE INSTITUTION'S WEBSITE SHOULD BE UP-TO-DATE, CLEAR AND OBJECTIVE.

The QAU publishes data related to IQAS structure, organisation and operation. Furthermore, the QAU publishes data pertinent to the institutional quality policy and objectives, as well as information and data relevant to the Institution's internal and external evaluation. In the context of the self-assessment process, the QAU verifies that adequate information regarding the teaching activities and, particularly, the programmes' profile and the overall institutional activity is publicly available. QAU makes recommendations for improvement, where appropriate.

The public information available via the internet should appear in Greek and in English, the webpages should have uniform architecture, structure and content across all academic units of the Institution, so that the users can easily identify the information of their interest.

Documentation

E6.1 Results of the assessment of the functionality and the content, as well as of the maintenance and update of the Institution's webpage

E6.2 List of the links included in the Institution's and QAU webpage, and of the special personalized internet applications

Institution compliance

I. Findings

The University of Patras uses all the tools given to them via the digitalisation of procedures regarding information publicity. Information related to students, academic staff, teaching staff and stakeholders is posted on the University's social media and website throughout the year. Applications have also been created to facilitate continuous contact with students, academic staff and the university's administrative services.

II. Analysis

The University of Patras maintains a central website describing its identity, history and facilities, including all departments and programs along with their detailed study programs (mode of study, evaluation criteria, course outlines, and tuition fees). This website is updated by QAU

at regular intervals and has valid and timely information in two languages, Greek and English, except that it is accessible to people with disabilities. It is important to mention the upcoming implementation of the website evaluation through a questionnaire. On the website, there are announcements about events that will take place within the university's framework. At the same time, there is information about internships and ERASMUS programs conducted by the university, details about the teaching staff, the actions of students (voluntary, theatrical, football team), and internal and external evaluation reports of the institution and departments.

In addition to the website, the University of Patras has a social media profile that informs students about the University's activities.

The existence of applications such as "ALEXANDRIA," which provides information about the number of teachers' publications, and "my.upatras," to which students can access information about any issues that may concern an academic community, plays an important role.

Using the website as a policy tool for transparency that helps to create the communication strategy, the University of Patras adequately publishes information about its academic activities in a direct and accessible way; the information is up-to-date, clear, and objective. In conclusion, we understand the importance of disclosing information to the public in attracting, informing, and contacting students, academics, staff, and the local community.

III. Conclusions

EEAP concluded that the University is compliant with regards to Principle 6, though the Panel's recommendations should be addressed.

Panel judgement

Principle 6: PUBLIC INFORMATION	
Compliance	X
Partial compliance	
Non-compliance	

Panel Recommendations

R6. 1: EEAP recommends that the University updates frequently their website and social media posts.

R6.2: The University is recommended to provide adequate guidance and information of the my.upatras application.

Principle 7: EXTERNAL EVALUATION AND ACCREDITATION OF THE IQAS

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD BE PERIODICALLY EVALUATED BY COMMITTEES OF EXTERNAL EXPERTS SET BY THE HAHE, FOR THE PURPOSE OF ACCREDITATION OF THEIR INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS (IQAS). THE PERIODICITY OF THEIR EXTERNAL EVALUATION IS DETERMINED BY THE HAHE.

External quality assurance, in the case in point external evaluation aiming at accreditation, may act as a means of verification of the effectiveness of the Institution's internal quality assurance, and as a catalyst for improvement, while opening new perspectives. Additionally, it can provide information with a view to public acknowledgement of the positive course of the Institution's activities .

The Higher Education Institutions engage in periodic external quality assurance which is conducted taking into consideration any special requirements set by the legislation governing the operation of the Institutions and their academic units.

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

Documentation

E7.1 Five-year Progress Report, on the response to the recommendations included in the most recent IQAS Accreditation Report

Institution compliance

I. Findings

The first Quality Assurance Accreditation was carried out in 2018 after its approval by the Senate. The result was that all processes and procedures were aligned to the QAU. During the Panel discussion with QAU and other staff members, It was evident that all faculty members recognised the importance of the process and its contribution to continuous quality improvement and appeared eager to get involved in the follow -up actions. All internal stakeholders of the programs, including academic, administrative and support staff, and undergraduate students, regional and local governance are involved in the QA of the institution. While external stakeholders and alumni are informally involved in the processes. The University, with effort and in a short time, fully integrated its new Departments in QA under the auspices of QAU.

During the meetings, the faculty demonstrated that they are fully aware of the importance of external review and the positive effects that can result for improving the quality goals.

The University's QAU has taken into consideration all the recommendations of the Institution's external evaluation 2018 in topics of improving infrastructure and buildings, encouraging the participation of external stakeholders, improvement of course materials, enhancement of OMEA and better promoting of research activities and the profile of academic staff. At the same time, it appears that has made significant progress towards increasing students' participation in the course assessment evaluation process, following the related recommendations of the external report.

II. Analysis

As already discussed in the findings, faculty, staff, and lab personnel were sufficiently aware of the external review's importance and did their best to present relevant information to EEAP promptly and efficiently. The subsequent report evaluates the progress made in completing the action plans.

III. Conclusions

EEAP concluded that the University is compliant with regards to Principle 7.

Panel judgement

Principle 7: EXTERNAL EVALUATION AND ACCREDITATION OF THE IQAS	
Compliance	X
Partial compliance	
Non-compliance	

Panel Recommendations

R7.1: The University should establish formal and well-defined procedures to elicit, use and evaluate feedback from students and external stakeholders.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

- The University shows strong commitment to quality assurance and continuous improvement, as evidenced by its well-defined strategic plan.
- UPAT has a well-defined procedure for identifying and planning the necessary resources to support its academic activities.
- A number of admin departments have certified their quality systems using ISO. This is a great practice.

II. Areas of Weakness

- Lack of industrial funding and reliance on public funding.
- UPAT do not use all the KPIs for development of their policies and action plans.
- The participation of external stakeholders and alumni is not formally defined and implemented in the QA.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- The University should involve the students in their committees (QAU, OMEA) to ensure plurality, openness and fairness of their policies.
- The University should provide further evidence on how the KPIs have evolved over the past five years across all school and faculties.
The University is encouraged to enhance the participation of external stakeholders in their processes and policies.
The University should diversify funding sources by reducing its reliance on public funding and mitigate the impact of fluctuations in external funding.
- The University should enhance data collection and analysis processes to ensure that accurate and reliable data is available to inform decision-making.
The QUA must include a representation of visiting staff and employed researchers.
The QUA should standardize the analysis of the data QAU collects.
- The University should develop a dashboard for monitoring key performance indicators.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where compliance has been achieved are:

1,2,3,4,6, and 7.

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are:

5.

The Principles where failure of compliance was identified

are:

None.

Overall Judgement	
Compliance	X
Partial compliance	
Non-compliance	

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname

Signature

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