



**ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ**  
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



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

**Sociology**

**Institution: National and Kapodistrian University of Athens**

**Date: 21 March 2023**



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



Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the New Undergraduate Study Programme in operation of **Sociology** of the **National and Kapodistrian University of Athens** 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 new undergraduate study programme in operation of **Sociology** of the **National and Kapodistrian University of Athens** comprised the following four (4) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

- 1. Associate Professor Stelios Stylianou (Chair)**  
Cyprus University of Technology, Limassol, Cyprus
- 2. Professor Dimitrios Michailakis**  
University of Linköping, Linköping, Sweden
- 3. Professor Apostolis Papakostas**  
Södertörn University College, Stockholm, Sweden
- 4. Ms Athina Tsironi, Student of Political Science**  
University of Crete, Rethymno, Greece

## II. Review Procedure and Documentation

In reviewing the Undergraduate Study Programme of Sociology (hereafter the "Program") at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (hereafter the "University" or "NKUA"), the objectives of the External Evaluation and Accreditation Panel (hereafter the "Committee"), as described in the Guidelines for the Members of the External Evaluation and Accreditation Panel (EEAP), are (a) to establish whether the data provided from the various resources are consistent among one another and reflect the actual situation, (b) to identify strengths and areas of weakness and (c) to engage in a constructive dialogue with the Institution, leading to reflection and continuous enhancement of the Study Programme.

The Panel visited the Department of Sociology (hereafter the "Department") on two consecutive days, 13-14 March 2023, and worked on preparing its Accreditation Report (hereafter the "Report") between 15-18 March 2023. All members of the Committee were physically present in all meetings, except Ms Tsironi, who participated remotely through electronic means (ZOOM platform).

Following a well-prepared schedule provided by HAHE, the Committee held several separate interactive meetings during the two-day on-site visit as follows:

On Monday, March 13, the following meetings took place:

- Meeting with the Vice-Rector/President of MODIP & the Head of the Department
- Meeting with OMEA & MODIP representatives
- Meeting with teaching staff members

On Tuesday, March 14, the following meetings took place:

- Meeting with students
- Meeting with staff members and tour (classrooms, lecture halls, libraries, etc.)
- Meeting with employers and social partners
- Meeting with OMEA & MODIP representatives
- Closure meeting with the President of MODIP, the Head of the Department, OMEA & MODIP

During the above meetings, the Committee had the opportunity to meet, talk and interact with all participants. The discussions were very informative and constructive and were conducted in a cooperative spirit. During the last meeting, the Committee made an informal presentation of some initial key findings.

The internal evaluation report of the Department and other material were made available to the Panel electronically well in advance through HAHE. More information, documentation and clarifications were made available during the meetings. The Department and the University worked diligently in preparing the materials, as well as in organizing and hosting the meetings, including the remote participation of one Committee member. All meetings included presentations, discussions, and question and answer sessions.

The Committee feels that all entities and individuals involved in the preparation of the evaluation materials as well as the organization of the site visit did an excellent job and wishes to express its appreciation to the Department and the University in this respect.

This Report is based on information collected and views expressed during the meetings as well as on information contained in the internal evaluation report and other documents submitted before and during the meetings, including presentations and clarifications.

### **III. New Undergraduate Study Programme in operation Profile**

Based on the academic mission of the University, the needs of society and after studying the feasibility and sustainability of a department of sociology at the University, the Senate of the University decided to establish the Department in 2017. The Department's main goal is to produce graduates with knowledge and skills that will enable them to approach social issues sociologically and help them pursue careers in the private and the public sector.

The Department admitted the first student cohort in the Program in 2019 and since then it admits approximately the same number of students each year (roughly between 110-140). The number of students currently enrolled is 488. The majority of the first cohort will be graduating this semester.

The Program is a typical four-year undergraduate program, requiring 240 ECTS for the award a bachelor's degree in Sociology. The objectives of the Programme are comparable to those offered by other institutions around Europe. The content of the Program is rich, and it has the perspective of helping students and the local society in dealing with contemporary social challenges. The structure of the Program is simple, with general/core and elective courses, the latter organized in eight thematic areas.

The Programme is supported by faculty members of the Department (currently, five full-time teaching and research faculty, with two more to be appointed and one to be transferred soon, two special teaching faculty members and one professor emeritus) and faculty members from other departments of the University (14) or other universities (2). In addition, there are six academic fellows, and five associates from the National Centre for Social Research.

All faculty members of the Department are active researchers in a diversity of areas.

## 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 placed 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**

During the evaluation process, the Committee has assessed all aspects of the strategic planning and the feasibility and sustainability of the Department and the Program, with special attention to the parameters identified in the HAHE instructions. The Committee's findings regarding each of these parameters are listed below.

#### **a. Academic profile and mission of the Department**

The profile and mission of the Department are specified in the relevant report by MODIP. Its scientific field belongs in the internationally established scientific fields of Higher Education,

as defined by the UNESCO. This Program falls under the code 0314. It aims to cultivate sociological thinking, to contribute to public debate, to interpret social problems and to help activate social forces for the improvement of social institutions and society at large.

#### **b. Strategy of the University for the development of the Department**

The academic development strategy for the operation of the Department and the Program was specified after taking into consideration factors that influence studies and research and various social and academic parameters (a SWOT Analysis was performed). This resulted in favourable conclusions for the Department and the Program and in a strategy based on the principle of interdisciplinarity, the promotion of research, innovation and academic and public dialogue. At the level of administration, the emphasis is on establishing and sustaining rational administrative and business processes as well as internal procedures for the supervision of all operations.

#### **c. Feasibility**

The feasibility of the operation of the Department is justified based on the needs of the national and regional economy, on a comparison with other programs, developments in the field of sociology and the current situation in the academic landscape. The feasibility study has shown that the Program can serve current economic and social needs well, that the Program is sufficiently different from other sociology programs in operation in Greece (Panteion University, the University of Crete, and the University of the Aegean) and that it can enrich the academic map of the discipline with the entry of the largest and oldest university in Greece in the list of universities offering sociology degrees.

#### **d. Sustainability**

The Program is sustainable, given the current state of the University's infrastructure, human and material resources, existing services, and all other resources necessary for its operation, including, more specifically, sufficient teaching and research facilities, enough staff to implement at least the core curriculum (with a temporal planning for electing new faculty within a four-year operational plan), financial viability (national funding and public investment), promising funding opportunities (European or national resources), participation in research programs that will enrich financial resources and provide further incentives for infrastructure development) and existing services. The prospective postgraduate study programs in Sociology will bring additional income to the Department. In addition, the Department will utilize various other financial resources, such as donations and sponsorships from the public and private sectors.

#### **e. Structure of studies**

This is a typical 4-year undergraduate program, requiring 240 ECTS for the award a bachelor's degree in Sociology. Typically, students enrol in 5 courses of 6 ECTS each per academic semester, i.e., 30 ECTS per semester = 60 ECTS per year of study = 240 ECTS in four years. The objectives of the Programme are comparable to those of programs offered by other institutions around Europe. The structure of the Program is simple, with core and elective courses, the latter organized in eight thematic areas. Specifically, the programme includes 24 core mandatory courses, 13 mandatory-elective courses distributed in eight thematic units (Economy and Society; Science, Technology, Society; Politics and Society; Law and Society; Culture; Social Reproduction; Gender, Body, and Sexuality; and Social Anthropology) and 3 elective courses from other departments. The learning outcomes of the Program are clearly stated in the Student Guide, and they correspond to lower (knowledge) and upper (skills and

competencies) levels of intellectual development. These learning outcomes are pursued through teaching and learning activities which are increasingly more student centered. A noticeable commitment of the Department is to replace old-fashioned closed-book final exams as the only means of evaluation of student performance with student assignments, group work and open-book exams.

#### **f. Number of admitted students**

The Department admitted the first students in the Program in 2019 and since then it admits approximately the same number of students each year (137, 110, 114, 127 in 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 respectively). The number of students currently enrolled is 488. The majority of the first cohort will be graduating this semester. The proposed number of students to be admitted for each of the next four years is 167. The Program is academically equivalent to the other three sociology programs of the country (Panteion University, the University of Crete and the University of the Aegean) and therefore the right to transfer from them was initially recognized by the Ministry of Education. After the completion of the Department's certification procedures, it is expected that the right to transfer from other departments will be sustained.

#### **g. Postgraduate studies and research**

Even though the Department has started its operation with priorities oriented toward the smooth functioning and quality output of the undergraduate program, it does place high priority in the development of its research component as well. All staff members are involved in high quality research (including externally funded research projects) and the results of their work are widely disseminated in professional conferences, articles in peer-reviewed journals and books published by esteemed publishers. The design and implementation of graduate programs of study (master's degrees) will be in the priorities of the Department in the next few years. A doctoral program of study has also been approved by the University and will be in operation. These programs, together with the continuous involvement of the academic staff in sociological research programs and collaborative projects, are expected to be significant elements of the Department's identity in the next few years.

Based on the above, the Committee feels that the strategic planning for the Program is complete and appropriate. This conclusion is substantiated in the relevant documentation, where more details about the parameters presented above can be found. The feasibility and sustainability studies are of particular importance. Their conclusions are favourable to the Program and the Department, and the Committee endorses these conclusions.

## Panel Judgement

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

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

### **Panel Recommendations**

As the Committee is fully satisfied with all aspects of Principle 1, our only recommendation is that the University and the Department continue their good work in this respect and allocate all necessary resources in this important component.

## 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

An Internal Quality Assurance System is in operation at the University, aiming at the implementation of the institution's Quality Assurance Policy, which includes the institution's strategy for the establishment of new departments and programs of study. For this purpose, a university-level Quality Assurance Unit ("MODIP") is in place since 2008. Based on this policy, a stated departmental Quality Assurance Policy is being implemented at the Department. The implementation is monitored by an Internal Evaluation Group ("OMEA"). There is close cooperation between MODIP and OMEA for the review and improvement of the sociology program. The quality assurance policies, both at the University and at the Department, are realized by setting clearly specified and measurable quality assurance goals for the Department.

A detailed examination of the goals set for the current period supports that the aforementioned units and functions operate well with respect to goal setting and progress monitoring. The goals cover all important aspects of the operation of the Department: achieving departmental autonomy (by recruiting more teaching and research faculty),

improving teaching and learning (by promoting student-centered activities and student mobility), promotion of research productivity, collaboration and dissemination (by attracting national and international research funds, supporting doctoral research and research collaborations with external scholars, faculty mobility, conference organization, conference participation), human resource development (by recruitment of teaching, research and administrative staff) and facilities (lecture rooms, labs and offices). It is also important to stress that the allocation of responsibilities for promoting these goals is clearly stated. Other than MODIP and OMEA, responsibility is distributed to the Departmental Council, the Department Secretariat, Erasmus coordinators, lab directors and all teaching and research faculty.

In conclusion, the Committee believes that the policy fulfils the quality assurance requirements for the Program. The policy includes well-defined structures and procedures appropriate and adequate for maintaining quality standards at the national and European level. Of particular importance is also the fact that the goals set for improvement of the Program are relevant, specific, realistic, and measurable within a clearly stated time frame.

#### Panel Judgement

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

#### Panel Recommendations

As the Department of Sociology is new, the outcome of the implementation of most of the quality assurance policies is yet to be observed. The Committee's recommendation is that these policies be pursued without compromise until their results can be more securely evaluated and then be updated.

### **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**

This is a new department established at the NKUA, a well-established academic institution in the Greek university landscape. The Department was established following a long-term wish, discussions, and efforts in the faculty about the need to establish a distinct department of sociology within the Faculty of Political Sciences and Economics. The fact that several renowned Greek sociologists worked in the Faculty was an important part of this process. The first-generation professional sociologists have now retired, and new members have been appointed or transferred from nearby academic disciplines.



The University has followed well defined procedures for the establishment and monitoring of the Program. It is clear from the relevant strategic documents that this is a program with ambitious expectations formulated at a general level, mainly the need of sociology for society. In the relevant documents we did not find a more concrete and systematic analysis of the labour market's need for sociologists in the future and more concrete competencies that sociologists need for potential employment. The stakeholders that participated in the evaluation process were mainly research institutions giving some indication about the orientation of the program towards high level theoretical and methodological competencies in the discipline of sociology and its research methods.

This is a 240 ECTS four-year program with a compulsory part and elective courses. Writing a thesis is not compulsory. The core courses in sociology are at levels I and II. The elective part is structured in eight thematic areas, each of which includes four rather introductory courses in various subthemes of sociology and nearby areas. In total the program contains 55 courses. There are no prerequisites in the program. This seems to help students' smooth progression in the program, as about 65 percent of senior (8th semester) students have passed all courses and will most likely be graduating this semester, i.e., in four years of study, which is the minimum and optimum duration (it is also notable that those seniors who have not passed all courses "owe" only 1-5 courses for graduation). On the other hand, without prerequisites, a student can theoretically take a course in the third year of studies without having passed the previous years' courses. Courses securing the acquisition of digital skills have been introduced and are sufficient.

The link between research and teaching is accomplished (a) by linking literature with research, (b) by linking teaching with research and (c) by partially linking the research conducted by members of the Department with the content of the courses offered. Some students will link research with education by writing a thesis.

The members of the Department are recruited mainly from disciplines other than sociology. The impression of the Committee is that this fact has affected the design of the program. While the program offers many introductory courses in subthemes at the intersection of sociology and nearby disciplines, the core program in mainstream sociology and methods is rather weak and there are ambiguities concerning the degree of progression and deepening of sociological knowledge. The courses in the thematic areas are all electives and not sequenced. The impression of the Committee is that the thematic areas are useful for the organization of knowledge but do not constitute coherent thematic areas. Also, classic sociology texts are almost absent from the readings of the program.

Overall, the Committee observes an apparent incongruence between the number of faculty members (full-time teaching and research faculty = 5 + 2 to be appointed + 1 to be transferred, special teaching faculty = 2), the number of students enrolled in the program (488), the number of thematic areas (8) and the number of the courses offered (55). The contribution of faculty members from other departments and other institutions partially relieves this problem.

Additionally, the stakeholders introduced to the Committee represented research institutions. The Committee thinks that the link to society outside the University is rather partial. Links to potential employers from the public and private sectors or civil society organizations are not established and the program is not adjusted to future employment there.

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

We strongly recommend that the sociological core of the program is strengthened by introducing more advanced courses in Sociological Theory and Research Methods and original texts from classical and modern sociological theory. These courses should be in a rational sequence with the existing theoretical and methodological courses (with lower-level courses being prerequisites for higher-level ones).

We strongly recommend the reduction of the 8 thematic areas to 3. One of them could be "Social Research", to meet the expectations of the stake holders that are mainly research institutions. With this change in place, it can be required that students choose one thematic area as their area of concentration, reasonably having to take 8-10 courses in that area. In such case, a few core thematic courses could be mandatory in each thematic area. Courses should be sequenced based on progressivity and deepening of knowledge. Optionally, the Department could consider reduction of the elective courses offered, should this be necessary for the proper elaboration of the thematic areas.

A compulsory bachelor's thesis preparation course can also be introduced. Reasonably, this should be placed in the 7th semester to allow all students to get a good idea of what a bachelor's thesis is and what it takes to do it. The thesis will still be optional in the 8th semester and students who choose this option should be supervised in a uniform way (i.e., a standard number of hours of support on each aspect of the thesis, such as study design, methods, analysis, ethics and writing up).

The Committee believes that the Department will benefit from enhancing its interactions with stakeholders, like employers from the public and private sectors and civil society organisations, in various ways, including the development of the undergraduate (and later the graduate) program.

## Principle 4: Student-centered 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**

The aim of the Program is to train students in the theory and methods of sociology and to educate them with the skills necessary for understanding the complexities and challenges of the Greek society as part of a global world. It reflects the needs of the rapidly changing Greek society as well as the globalised world where issues of digitalization, multiculturalism and exclusion are central.

The main pedagogical methods are lectures, seminars, and labs. Research-led teaching is supported by two distinct labs (*Laboratory for Social Theory and Research* and *Digital Studies Laboratory*). Labs present their work in organised, separate webpages.

The programme is organised in eight thematic units: 1. Economy and Society; 2. Science, Technology, Society; 3. Politics and Society; 4. Law and Society; 5. Culture; 6. Social Reproduction; 7. Gender, Body, and Sexuality; 8. Social anthropology. The possibility of thematic specialisation promotes a student-centred program creating flexible learning paths while encouraging students to develop individual skills. While the ability to specialise thematically unquestionably promotes a student-centred programme by creating flexible learning paths and by encouraging students to develop individual skills, the sheer number of courses and the combinations that students can potentially make might produce very different, or even incommensurable, outcomes regarding the skills of graduates with a bachelor's degree in sociology.

The members of the Department are well aware of the latest trends in pedagogy and do their best to implement those practices. For example, they are familiar with the benefits of small group teaching, such as seminars and tutorials.

The teacher-student relationship is very strong. Members of the faculty support their students' learning process through individual email communications and face-to-face meetings. Students reported that teachers are generally very responsive and supportive. The commitment of the teachers to their students and to the Program is praiseworthy.

The process of revising and improving the curriculum considers students' evaluations of each course. All undergraduate courses are subject to student evaluation. Student satisfaction is also measured through questionnaires. The evaluations are among the most important resources that the faculty can employ to assess the effectiveness and appropriateness of teaching, including the curriculum. Questions asked follow international standards, e.g. whether the objectives of the course are clear, whether the material covered meets the objectives of the course, whether the material is well organized, whether the material used helps to better understand the subject matter, how satisfactory are the main textbooks or notes and how difficult is the course for its level. Students are also asked to evaluate how the teachers have organized the presentation of the material in the lessons, whether teachers succeed in stimulating interest in the subject matter of the course, whether they analysed and presented the concepts in a simple and interesting way using examples, whether they encourage students to raise questions and queries and to develop their own judgement, etc. There are also questions about the adequacy of the equipment of the labs, about the attendance of students in the courses and labs and about how demanding each course is.

The instrument of Academic Advisor is well organized. The Academic Advisor is a member of the faculty and provides guidance to students regarding the choice of their courses and any problems that may arise during their studies.

There exist regulations to deal with the complaints and objections from students aiming at strengthening the student-centered educational process and systematically improving the quality of the educational and administrative services provided. These objections refer to disagreement over studies and attendance, inappropriate behaviour by a member of the academic or administrative staff, inadequate guidance of students by a member of the academic staff, etc. There is place for student appeals and for examining inconsistencies and cases of multiple failures. The 'Student's Advocate' is a service of great importance and will address any grievance issues that may unfold.

The overall understanding of the Committee is that the Program is delivered in a student-centered learning environment that promotes mutual respect. Still, a number of standard processes need to be further developed.

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

Students must be encouraged to engage in research that allows them to acquire research and writing skills.

There is room for the use of innovative methods in the supervision of theses. If such methods are properly designed, they could increase the number of students who opt-in for writing a thesis.

The Committee strongly recommends that, other than the final examination, the evaluation of students' performance in all courses includes graded activities that will help the grading system depart even more from the lower levels of Bloom's taxonomy (knowledge, understanding) toward application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation levels. For example, one or more individual or group written assignments applying sociological theory on contemporary issues would be an excellent way to promote these upper-level skills and it will also enhance student involvement in the courses throughout the semester. Such approaches are already included in many courses; the recommendation of the Committee is to generalize this practice to all courses.

## **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**

Students enter the Program through a national system of access based on equal competition, organized by the Ministry of Education of Greece. In 2022, the student admission number reached 127 students. The department has limited influence on admission processes. The Program's entrance lowest grade is 13.710 and the highest is 16.730, which is considerably high in the Greek university admission reality.

The completion of the studies in the Department entails 24 mandatory subjects, 13 mandatory subjects of choice, 3 subjects of "free choice" and an optional thesis project (equal to 12 ECTS). The main topics that subjects are related to are the following: finance, politics, society,

technology, culture, sexuality and gender, social anthropology, and law. Furthermore, the students throughout the program attain knowledge and skills on digital tools and processes.

Students can track their progress through an Informative System ([my-studies.uoa.gr](http://my-studies.uoa.gr)). Each student, in case an issue emerges related to their studies or other matters, can reach out to the student advisor or the secretary of the Department. So far, there is no Student Ambassador appointed that the Committee has been informed about.

Students have the opportunity to test their skills and improve their knowledge outside the Program by conducting an internship in external institutions and companies. The internships equal 6 ECTS according to European Standards. The procedures around the internship are clearly explained on the website of the Department ([www.soc.uoa.gr](http://www.soc.uoa.gr)) and students can get updates through the university system called E-class.

First-year students are smoothly welcomed at the Department and there is a greeting day event for the newcomers and an online guide regarding this process ([www.soc.uoa.gr](http://www.soc.uoa.gr)).

During their studies, students can participate in Erasmus+ or CIVIS programs with sufficient help and information from the Erasmus Office.

Graduates receive a "Diploma Supplement" from the Secretariat of the Department, in which their academic progression is described in both Greek and English.

Overall, based on our inspection of teaching and learning materials provided and the evaluation process, we conclude that the program, its different parts, the expected outcomes at different levels, the duration of the studies and the content of different courses are well documented and detailed in the handbook of studies and other relevant documents. All teaching and learning documents are easily accessible.

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

The Committee wishes to encourage the Department to further promote the mobility of students via the Erasmus programs. The Erasmus opportunities and destinations can be further enriched.

The Department should also systematize participation in the internship program, promote additional participation and extend its duration.

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

### **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 recognized systems of scientific evaluation (e.g., Google Scholar, Scopus, etc.)*

### **Study Programme Compliance**

The Department of Sociology currently has seven faculty members, while the staff is supplemented by five faculty members from other departments of the University. The teaching needs of the Department are supported by a significant number of faculty members from other departments and the National Centre of Social Research (EKKE).

From the information provided, it is evident that the performance of the Department's permanent teaching staff is rather good. Staff members have a total of 183 publications, including 15 in the past academic year in peer-reviewed journals, several in non-peer-reviewed journals, a considerable number of papers in conference proceedings, 16 monographs, 39 books and 143 chapters in edited volumes, while hundreds of citations are recorded by the various search platforms.

Looking at the CVs of the faculty members as they appear in the Department's webpage, there is evidence of cooperation with foreign institutions in research projects. The international orientation of the department is also reflected in the use of the Erasmus program and in the international conferences organized through initiatives of the department.



The teaching load, as regulated by legislation, ranges from two to four three-hour courses per semester. In comparison to international standards, the teaching workload is very good. According to the information received in the meeting with the faculty, the teacher to student ratio is about 1:12. This figure includes all persons teaching in the Program. Class attendance is not mandatory and students stated that class attendance is often around 50% of students registered in a certain course. Overall, the career prospects are good. Given the low student-faculty ratio and the workload, the possibilities for research are good.

A key factor that contributes to the professional development of the faculty members is the cooperative climate observed in the Department. Our impression is that there is an atmosphere of collegiality in the Department.

The competence of faculty members falls in a sense and somehow within the field of sociology. The main problem, according to our understanding, is that the great majority of the teachers' skills are not within the discipline they are recruited to develop. This is also reflected in the fragmented structure of the program and in the courses they offer to students. The Department is meant to be a department of sociology, but its sociological gaze can hardly be discerned. Observing social phenomena, like art, law, and the economy, does not necessarily mean that the observation and the concomitant description is sociological. What makes an observation, a description and an analysis sociological is the degree to which they are done with sociological theory (cf. Principle 3).

#### Panel Judgement

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

#### Panel Recommendations

The Committee believes that the Department should further strengthen its capacity to deliver sociological training to students and its profile and reputation as a sociology department by making the sociological gaze, what it means to think sociologically, more present. The Committee *strongly* recommends that the recruitment policy of the Department takes into consideration that the competencies in mainstream sociology need to be strengthened by recruiting faculty members with sociological background. One way to do this would be to recruit at least one full professor in sociology and at least two other members with substantial experience in sociology. The merit portfolio of new staff members should include considerable previous activity in the field of sociology and international publication activity. Additionally, it is recommended that the Department further promotes mobility of faculty via the ERASMUS programs and other relevant academic avenues. Finally, we recommend the introduction of a few courses offered in a foreign language to attract international students and faculty.

## 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 organized 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**

During the evaluation the panel was able to comprehend the effort of the Department to provide high quality education in the best possible way with the already existing human resources and infrastructure. Specifically, the Department has access to the University's Library, has a gym and student dorms in a good condition and adequately equipped.

During the discussion the Panel had with the students, the help and guidance from the student advocate and the secretary of the Department was highlighted. There is also an Office dedicated to the engagement and help of vulnerable groups and in all buildings, there is proper access for students with disabilities. The premises provide full wi-fi coverage and students, staff and guests can use the "Eduroam protocol", although based on the students' reporting, the internet is not fast enough.

In order to provide students with the best possible help, the staff of the Department goes through seminars and educational workshops in private or public organizations. Furthermore, the students have access to digital documents and publications not only from the library but also from E-class. Additionally, they are given a student ID and the opportunity to learn foreign languages like English.

The students are very satisfied with the support of their teachers. The Committee noticed that the teachers devote a significant part of their time teaching in smaller groups that enable the deployment of interactive teaching methods.

Lastly, students have the opportunity to enrol in an internship in private or public sectors and get a small amount of money for that, which is not adequate for the students' needs during the internship. The Committee has concluded that even though there is some financing, it is not enough and there could be an improvement.

#### Panel Judgement

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

#### Panel Recommendations

The Committee underlines the importance of substantial financial support by the State to ensure the continuity and increase of high-quality research outputs and recommends that the Department takes action to increase the number of available computer workstations for students, to take appropriate measures that ensure the security and the protection of premises, staff and students from criminal actions and improve the Internet across the Department.

## 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 analyzing 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**

This is a new department in an old university with well-established collegial organs, devices and routines to collect, analyse, evaluate and report information concerning the quality-relevant aspects of the studies.

The main unit responsible for the quality assurance is MODIP, that is the overarching Quality Assurance organ for the whole university. At the department level, the OMEA is the collegial organ that corresponds to the functions of MODIP.

The administrative staff at the department is responsible for the practical matters. Modern digital means are used to collect and report information and data. Moreover, the department has established data collection procedures which are used actively to monitor specific areas of interest such as the percentage of students that fail each course, each course's failure rate and how this changes from year to year and the type of assessment (oral, written, essays) and its potential role in students' progression.

The impression of the Committee is that all the above are functioning smoothly. Nearly all participants in the evaluation process praised the functionality of these operations.

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

No recommendations.

## 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**

A well-designed and informative website is offered (<https://www.soc.uoa.gr/>). Information regarding the study program, courses, teaching and research staff as well as internal regulations are available online.

The information, in most cases, is current, transparent, and accessible. In addition, the website offers links that direct students to additional information. The Department communicates its teaching and academic activities mainly through its website. The provided information is adequate, but it refers primarily to the present.

The Department website provides details about the structure, human resources, and infrastructure, e.g., undergraduate studies, Erasmus or CIVIS exchange programs. Announcements are available on the homepage. The Study Program Guide, as well as the outline of the individual courses, are available online in Greek (not in English, although there is a short description). The Committee acknowledges the assigned personnel's willingness and dedication to maintain and upgrade the Department's website.

As the Department has not produced any graduates yet, it does not have an e-platform for alumni. In due time, such a platform would be a valuable networking tool that will connect alumni with each other, with the Department and with students in the Program. Alumni can benefit from this networking with respect to their careers and students can learn from the experiences of alumni.

The professional prospects of graduates are not adequately covered by Department's information resources. There also appears to be limited social media presence of the Department. This presence could help to increase the visibility of its research and teaching activities.

## Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 9: Public information concerning the new undergraduate programmes</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

## Panel Recommendations

The English version of the website should be further enriched.

The Department should establish an Alumni e-platform to track the employability and career paths of graduates.

The Department is encouraged to take advantage of social media platforms with academic focus.

The Department should continue to standardize and update its course syllabi by providing detailed assignments, due dates, and other pertinent information known to impact student success.

## 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 analyzed 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**

The self-assessment, the external evaluation, the MODIP indicators, the questionnaires of students and graduates, the consultation of the committees of the Department and the General Assembly, are key sources that contribute to the on-going monitoring and periodic review of the Program. Each member of the teaching staff is responsible for the updating of the content, the bibliography, and the pedagogical methods of his/her course. The review of the content of the program in light of the latest research in the given discipline ensures that the program is up to date. The program is primarily designed and developed by the Department's academic staff, and it is subject to external evaluation.

The Program is monitored annually by the faculty members of the Department both individually and collectively within the framework of the OMEA and the Departmental Assembly.

The participation of faculty members in research projects, conferences, workshops, seminars and the production of publications by faculty members plays a key role in the revision of the curriculum. This, in turn, enriches the teaching activities, thus contributing to the updating of course material.

The assessment, updating, and upgrading of the curriculum, seminars and self-study courses taught by the academic staff is conducted individually by each faculty member and in cooperation with colleagues.



## Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 10: Periodic internal review of the new study programmes</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

## Panel Recommendations

Periodic internal review of study programs is an essential tool for reflection and improvement, more so for new programs. The Committee recommends that this practice be given even more priority in the next 2-3 years. This recommendation is nested within our more general recommendation for the restructuring of the program and its content.

## **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 realized 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 utilization of the recommendations of the external Evaluation of the Institution and of the IQAS Accreditation Report.*

### **Study Programme Compliance**

This is the first time the Department is evaluated by an external committee. Meanwhile:

1. The impression of the Committee is that the preparation of the evaluation already had significant impact concerning the self-reflection and self-evaluation of the Department and the Program.
2. The members of the Department put much effort in making the department evaluable as the quality of the information and the presentations were excellent, making the practices and routines at the department legible to the outside observer.
3. All members of the Department were cooperative during the visit in situ.
4. The Committee feels that the dialogue between the Committee and the members of the staff, students and stakeholders was constructive and fruitful.
5. The Committee noticed a percipient attitude toward the comments of the members of the Committee.

The Committee thus feels that the Department is willing to use the evaluation process as an important device for future improvement.

## Panel Judgement

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

## Panel Recommendations

The only recommendation by the Committee is that the Department, the University and HAHE continue their excellent cooperation in continuing and further enhancing the external evaluation of this and other programs.

## **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**

- *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*
- *The study regulations, template for the degree and the diploma supplement*
- *Name list of teaching staff, status, subject and the course they teach / examine*

*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*

### **Study Programme Compliance**

This principle does not apply to the current evaluation.

## **PART C: CONCLUSIONS**

### **I. Features of Good Practice**

The Committee feels that the University, the Department, and the other entities involved in the establishment and operation of the Program (notably MODIP, OMEA and the Department's Secretariat), have overall worked carefully and effectively to fulfil set requirements and create conditions for the new program to operate smoothly. This conclusion is reflected both in our comments for each of the Principles of reference and in the grading results. Thus, we note, as a feature of general good practice, the overall attention, the resource allocation and the effective coordination at all levels and phases of the project. More specifically, with respect to process, these appraisals apply to strategic planning, including the feasibility and sustainability studies, the enrolment analyses and the perspectives for offering graduate degrees, the quality assurance policy and its implementation and administration by MODIP and OMEA and the policies for periodic internal and external reviews. With respect to substance, these appraisals apply to the promotion of student-centered methods in teaching and learning, admission, and progression of students toward the award of the degree, the resources and support available to students, collection and processing of information and publicity.

### **II. Areas of Weakness**

Our judgment is also overall favourable for the program design and faculty recruitment, albeit with some reservations. Regarding the Program, we feel that the considerable and commendable effort put into designing a solid sociology degree has been largely successful but also that it could have been more focused on strengthening the sociological foundations of the Program and on building strong directions of concentration. Thus, we believe that the program needs more structure and a concentration component. Regarding the academic background of the Department's faculty and, consequently, the Department's disciplinary identity, we feel that a more solid sociological foundation is necessary.

### **III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions**

We feel that we should first recommend, as a general good practice recommendation, that the Department and the University continue their very good work in all aspects of the operation of the Program, including the presentation and the preparation of the application dossier for the current evaluation.

Following the observations above, we recommend that the Program be restructured. Core requirements are already sufficient; consider giving some structure to the list. Concentration requirements will provide a choice to students to go further and deeper in one of (we suggest) three areas of concentration. These don't have to be too narrow; one of them can be social research (please see our comments under Principle 3).

With respect to the faculty, we believe that more sociologists are needed. We suggest that in the current and next phases of faculty selection, priority be placed on the sociological background of the potential candidates, i.e., on profile elements such as studies in sociology and/or extensive involvement in the sociological study of society (please see our comments under Principle 6).

#### IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: **1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11.**

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **3.**

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

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

Overall Judgement	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	<b>X</b>
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

## The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

**Name and Surname**

**Signature**

- 1. Associate Professor Stelios Stylianou (Chair)**  
Cyprus University of Technology, Limassol, Cyprus
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