Accreditation Report
for the Undergraduate Study Programme of:

Theology

Institution: National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
Date: 9 April 2023

Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the Undergraduate Study Programme of **Theology** 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 Undergraduate Study Programme of **Theology** of the **National and Kapodistrian University of Athens** (NKUA) comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

1. **Prof. Predrag Dragutinović**
   University of Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia (Chair)

2. **Prof. Vassilis Saroglou**
   Université Catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium

3. **Prof. Vasilios N. Makrides**
   University of Erfurt, Erfurt, Germany

4. **Prof. Jack Khalil**
   University of Balamand, Tripoli, Lebanon

5. **Ms. Apostolia Kefala**
   Student, Department of Theology, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, Greece

II.   Review Procedure and Documentation

The External Evaluation and Accreditation Panel (EEAP) received the documents for review provided by the Department of Theology of the NKUA, which were accessible via HAHE cloud link sent to the members per email on 25 January 2023. Four of the EEAP members (Predrag Dragutinović, Vassilis Saroglou, Vasilios Makrides, and Rev. Jack Khalil) participated onsite in the review, whereas one member (Ms. Apostolia Kefala) participated remotely. The HAHE provided all members with the following documents based on the application submitted by the Department in 2020: a) the Department's Proposal for Accreditation, b) the 2020 Internal Evaluation Report (of MODIP), c) the Study Handbook (Study Programme and the description of courses offered in the year 2020), d) the HAHE Guidelines, and e) other relevant information about the Department. During the onsite visit, the EEAP consulted the Department's website and received additional documentation (e.g., the presentation of the Head of the Department as well as other digital material).

The review took place from 2 to 8 April 2023. The EEAP members first convened on 3 April for a briefing about their tasks and mission. Following this meeting, they visited the Department of Theology located at the campus of the NKUA, where the assessment procedure took place on two consecutive days, namely on 3 April (from 12:30 to 17:30) and 4 April (from 9:30 to 16:30). The review included various meetings with MODIP members, teaching and administrative staff, students, graduates, and stakeholders. The EEAP also had a chance to visit classrooms, offices, laboratories, the Museum of the Faculty of Theology, the Library, as well as the Chapel of the St Apostle Paul. The EEAP held interviews with the President of MODIP (represented on the first session by Prof. Sofia Papaioannou), the Head of the Department (Prof. Dimitrios Moschos), OMEA members (Prof. Michalis Marioras, Prof. Stavros Giagkatzoglou, Prof. Alexandra Palantza, Rev. Prof. Aristarchos Grekas, and Prof. Fotios Apostolos) and MODIP representatives (Mr. Konstatinos Bourletidis, Mr. Theodoros Hadjitheodorou, and Prof. Sofia Papaioannou), teaching staff members, undergraduate students, graduates/alumni of the Study Programme, and external stakeholders from the public and private sectors. It was a great honour to receive the visit of the Rector of the NKUA, Prof. Meletios-Athanasios Dimopoulos, and Vice-Rector Prof. Dimitrios Karadimas.

They both expressed their appreciation of the Department and made very positive and supportive statements about it. During every working day, the EEAP members held a debriefing session to share impressions and reflect on their findings. During the concluding session on 4 April, the members presented their impressions, observations, and preliminary findings to MODIP and OMEA members, who had a chance to respond. In the following days, the EEAP convened to discuss and finalize the Accreditation Report. The EEAP would like to highlight the substantial work carried out by the University and the Department in preparing the material for accreditation, which was rich in terms of quantity and quality. The EEAP members have the conviction that all meetings with the authorities of the University and the representatives of the Department were held in a spirit of hospitality, collaboration, collegiality, and readiness to support the work of the EEAP in every respect.

III.   Study Programme Profile

The Faculty of Theology, one of the first four Faculties of the University of Athens founded in 1837, was initially named "Theological Faculty of the Othonian University". In 1862, it was renamed "Theological Faculty of the National University", in 1911 "Theological Faculty of the Kapodistrian University", and since 1932 "Theological Faculty of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens". It first opened and operated in the neoclassical building of the private residence of the architect Stamatios Kleanthis, which was the first building of the University of Athens. In 1841, it moved to the main building on Panepistimiou Street and in 1976 to the University Campus, Ano Ilisia.

The Faculty of Theology was a single unified body until 1974, when a Pastoral Department was first established by state decree within it specifically for the training of the clergy. One year later, however, it was abolished, followed by the establishment of the Department of Priestly Formation, which was also closed down in 1977. In the same year, the Pastoral Department was re-established with a four-year Study Programme and the purpose to train Church clergy, monks, and laymen in order to staff positions of ecclesiastical ministry. Finally, two Departments were established at the Faculty of Theology, the Department of Theology and the Department of Pastoral Theology, renamed later "Department of Social Theology" (today under the name "Social Theology and Study of Religion"). Initially, only graduates of the Department of Theology had the right to be appointed to the Secondary Education, but afterwards this right was also granted to graduates of both Departments.

The Department of Theology offers an Undergraduate and a Postgraduate Study Programme. They give students the opportunity to learn about and explore the development and forms of the key events and teachings of Christianity. The Programme enables the examination of the history, the teaching, and the culture of Orthodox Christianity in relation to socio-political, philosophical and other movements across time, the sciences, the arts, other forms of Christianity, non-Christian religions and other manifestations of the religious phenomenon, as well as to contemporary interdisciplinary dialogue.

The services of the Department of Theology are destined to scholarship, to the Church, and to the Greek and generally European society. Laymen and clergy acquire the necessary knowledge and develop the skills required to become Religious Education teachers and creative scholars in terms of research and teaching religion. The Department educates members of the Church too (clergy, laymen and monks), so that they become able to meet the obligations that come with occupying various positions, not only in the Church itself, but also in other areas of public life. Graduates of the Department can make a constructive contribution in creating communication links between theology, Church, and society, either by serving as clergy or as professionals in education and in the wider social sphere, as well as in the study and promotion of the culture that has been shaped by the contribution of Orthodoxy up to the present day.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

Principle 1: Academic Unit Policy for Quality Assurance

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD APPLY A QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY AS PART OF THEIR STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT. THIS POLICY SHOULD EXPAND AND BE AIMED (WITH THE COLLABORATION OF EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS) AT ALL INSTITUTION'S AREAS OF ACTIVITY, AND PARTICULARLY AT THE FULFILMENT OF QUALITY REQUIREMENTS OF UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES. THIS POLICY SHOULD BE PUBLISHED AND IMPLEMENTED BY ALL STAKEHOLDERS.

The quality assurance policy of the academic unit is in line with the Institutional policy on quality, and is included in a published statement that is implemented by all stakeholders. It focuses on the achievement of special objectives related to the quality assurance of study programmes offered by the academic unit.

The quality policy statement of the academic unit includes its commitment to implement a quality policy that will promote the academic profile and orientation of the programme, its purpose and field of study; it will realise the programme's strategic goals and it will determine the means and ways for attaining them; it will implement the appropriate quality procedures, aiming at the programme's continuous improvement.

In particular, in order to carry out this policy, the academic unit commits itself to put into practice quality procedures that will demonstrate:

a) *the suitability of the structure and organisation of the curriculum;*
b) *the pursuit of learning outcomes and qualifications in accordance with the European and the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education;*
c) *the promotion of the quality and effectiveness of teaching;*
d) *the appropriateness of the qualifications of the teaching staff;*
e) *the enhancement of the quality and quantity of the research output among faculty members of the academic unit;*
f) *ways for linking teaching and research;*
g) *the level of demand for qualifications acquired by graduates, in the labour market;*
h) *the quality of support services such as the administrative services, the Library, and the student welfare office;*
i) *the conduct of an annual review and an internal audit of the quality assurance system of the undergraduate programme(s) offered, as well as the collaboration of the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG) with the Institution's Quality Assurance Unit (QAU).*

Study Programme Compliance

The Department follows a Policy for Quality Assurance regarding teaching and research. The MODIP's instructions are in line with the requirements of the HAHE and the European standards for Higher Education. The Internal Evaluation Committee (OMEA), which consists of five Professors of the Department, is responsible for coordinating the efforts of the Department for the composition of the internal assessment report to be submitted to MODIP. The latter collects findings and proceeds to make recommendations and suggestions. These are presented and

discussed in the regular Department's Council meetings. The Department decides on the necessary revisions and changes to be integrated in the curriculum.

In 2013, the Department had its first evaluation ever and, since then, it has demonstrated a positive attitude towards receiving external feedback and encouragement for improvement. It extends to the updating and modernization of its curriculum, especially by means of introducing new areas of learning and methods of teaching. It acknowledges the need for reinforcing the student-centred system of learning, monitoring the progress of students, improving the system of internships, and orienting students towards pursuing postgraduate studies while registering the career-paths followed by the Department's alumni. The EEAP could verify all this during the interviews with the graduates, social partners, and stakeholders.

In its Quality Policy, the Department follows the strategic priority to promote high-level education in the field of theology and the study of religion according to international standards. An important distinction for the Faculty of Theology of the NKUA was its inclusion in the results of the QS (Quacquarelli Symonds) published on 22 March 2023. According to the results of the ranking in the individual thematic field "Theology, Theology, and Religious Studies", the Faculty of Theology appeared for the first time in the history of rankings among the 140 best Study Programmes in the above area worldwide. This is a particularly important achievement, as the Department of Theology and that of Social Theology and Religious Studies that comprise the Faculty of Theology show a remarkable improvement in their international academic reputation, their research performance, and the trust and support from the labour market.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

None.

Principle 2: Design and Approval of Programmes

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

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

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

The Department of Theology conceived an adequate Study Programme to investigate the evolution and forms of the complex encounter between human speech and the revelation, history and impact of Christianity across time. Through this research, it makes students, in a student-centred way, the communicants of the acquired knowledge and develops their critical thinking, in order to form the skills that will render them useful in the cultivation of a cultural model that respects humans, their pursuits and the world at large. At the same time, students benefit by learning learn to develop a related meaningful lifestyle with numerous practical consequences. Although the Study Programme puts emphasis on the historical course and the teaching of Orthodox Christianity, it is nevertheless related and enters in dialogue with other forms of Christianity, with recent socio-political and philosophical currents, sciences, arts, as well as other religions and manifestations of the religious phenomenon.

In order to obtain a degree in Theology, students follow a well-designed Study Programme that spreads over eight (8) semesters (i.e., 4 years of studies) with a workload equivalent to 240 ECTS: 30 credits by semester, and 60 credits by year. Students need to attend and succeed in fifty-six (56) courses: thirty-six (36) are mandatory, twelve (12) are mandatory elective, and eight (8) are

freely elective. The Department gives students the possibility to choose eight (8) courses out of the 56 to acquire a Teaching Diploma (recognized by the European Union and other countries). Descriptions of the courses offered each semester are published online on the website of the Department. The examinations of the first semester are conducted in January, and for the second semester in June, while the make-up examination period is in September. The way examinations are carried out varies between written and oral, but it also includes research papers and presentations. Students participate actively in these academic procedures. Furthermore, there are three (3) laboratories:

1- Laboratory for the Study of Ancient Eastern Christianity

2- Pedagogical Laboratory for Religious Education

3- Laboratory of the Art of Iconography

In addition, the Department has a long-established Centre of Sinaitic Studies.

By teaching courses and mentoring seminars and work laboratories, the Department fulfils the highest standards for scholarly work and research. Furthermore, an interdisciplinary approach is adopted to tackle, in an impressive openness, the interface between Theology and contemporary issues and challenges, such as ecology, bioethics, and many more.

Students are well trained to conduct research in research centers, to work in the Church, in public and private schools, or to occupy any other function in society that values the wide knowledge and critical thought characterizing the successful graduates of the Department of Theology. This became clear after meeting with external stakeholders, social partners, and external co-workers, and receiving their thoroughly positive recommendation.

The students' progress is regularly monitored throughout different stages of the Study Programme, although many students do not sit for exams on a regular basis because of their need to work in parallel with their studies. After interviewing students, graduates, and stakeholders, the committee received assurance that the Study Programme generally achieves the set objectives and learning outcomes.

With regard to the relevant regulatory framework, there are two administrative boards for the internal control of the quality of the Study Programme, namely OMEA and MODIP. These monitor the regularity of the official procedure for the approval of the Study Programme by the institution. The EEAP had meetings with the members of OMEA and MODIP, and the information received from both was deemed very satisfactory.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

None.

Principle 3: Student-centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment

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

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

The student-centred learning and teaching process

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

The Department offers a variety of courses applying various pedagogical approaches and a plurality of methods. The teaching staff uses visual aids, such as PowerPoint, images, maps, charts, and the like, to assist students during lectures. Some courses include a practical exercise component in order to complement the theoretical side of the course, while visits to relevant sites are regularly carried out. Students are encouraged to actively participate in discussions during lectures and are asked to write short presentations. Interviews with students have shown that they are considered as active partners in the learning process and the interaction with the teaching staff.

The Department follows a system of course evaluation by students through electronic digital questionnaires. The process is carried out anonymously. The questionnaire is almost entirely based on the standard questionnaire of the HAHE, aside from some necessary adaptations. The participation of students in this procedure is not quite satisfactory, but this problem is not linked to the Department as such, since the same situation applies to and can be observed in the whole University.

The Department members serve as Student Advisors on a rotating basis. Every Advisor provides students with all information concerning course requirements, the schedule, registration, and the duration of studies. In cases of a problem arising in relation to the fairness and accuracy of the examinations, a special examination committee may be formed in accordance with the Department's regulations.

Students are also encouraged to take initiatives in their learning process. Apart from the individual choices when choosing those courses, which reflect more or less what they would like to pursue in their later professional life, an element that could complete the overall picture is teamwork. This is basically because cooperation, mutual understanding, and tolerance for a common purpose as well as the further development of a project may emerge out of teamwork. This is also vital for reinforcing various aspects of the students' personality, such as sympathy for diversity, which is beneficial for the common good.

With regard to the e-learning and e-classroom, an overall good condition was noticed.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The EEAP suggests the further enhancing of the students' overall teamwork beyond their individual assignments and output.

It also considers the further strengthening of the e-classroom as quite important for teaching. Since classrooms and lecture halls are equipped with permanent computers, it is advised to record the teacher's lectures for the students, so that those who for various reasons were absent from a class would not miss it completely, but have the possibility to resort to video-recorded lessons.

Principle 4: Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD DEVELOP AND APPLY PUBLISHED REGULATIONS COVERING ALL ASPECTS AND PHASES OF STUDIES (ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, RECOGNITION AND CERTIFICATION).

Institutions and academic units need to put in place both processes and tools to collect, manage and act on information regarding student progression.

Procedures concerning the award and recognition of higher education degrees, the duration of studies, rules ensuring students progression, terms and conditions for student mobility should be based on the institutional study regulations. Appropriate recognition procedures rely on institutional practice for recognition of credits among various European academic departments and Institutions, in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

Graduation represents the culmination of the students΄ study period. Students need to receive documentation explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed (Diploma Supplement).

Study Programme Compliance

The Department's students, who are mostly admitted through the Greek national examinations system, come from different backgrounds and present several particularities in comparison to other faculties of the University of Athens. For instance, it is not unusual to find many older and more mature students among them, who turn to theology after having obtained university degrees in other disciplines or after having worked professionally for years in various domains.

The Department has a system of welcoming new students that facilitates their familiarisation with the Department's curriculum, whereas it also pays attention to fill any eventual gaps of necessary background knowledge bequeathed from secondary education (e.g., in ancient Greek). The information about the Study Programme and the organisation of the Department are easily available to students through the Department's website (Student Handbook). Alongside the welcome information sessions, incoming students are assigned to students' advisors from higher semesters, who introduce them to their new level of university studies. With regard to all students, the same applies to the teaching staff of the Department as well as its Secretariat, which deals with students' issues to a large degree electronically. In the end, students become familiar in detail with the regulations governing the progression, recognition and certification of all aspects and phases of their studies (in compliance with broader European norms and principles). The existing ratio between students and teaching staff is deemed satisfactory, and the students' autonomy is supported by various means.

The Department's collaboration with and participation in teachers', staff, and student mobility through international programmes enhances its attractiveness and effectiveness and attests to its strong extrovert policies. The Department also puts emphasis on the practical skills and internship experience of its students in view of their future professional career and the absorption of its graduates by the wider labour market. For example, the Department has sent a delegation of 15 students to assist the Mega-Conference of the "International Orthodox Theological Association" (IOTA) in Volos in January 2023.

The EEAP found all these measures, together with the substantial improvements in the building and teaching infrastructure of the Department (and the Faculty by large), as extremely beneficial for the students and their Study Programme.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The already existing student international mobility (in the context of Erasmus or other bilateral university agreements) should be continued and even strengthened, despite various limitations; for example, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, deficits in foreign language skills, but also economic reasons. The Department is well aware of the numerous benefits of this mobility (in terms of foreign language acquisition, internationalization etc.), hence the EEAP encourages the Department to pursue this objective systematically.

The alumni network of the Department should be developed and established, as it is beneficial in numerous respects, especially for the job orientation and opportunities that it might offer to Theology graduates. The Department is equally committed to work further in this direction.

Principle 5: Teaching Staff

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD ASSURE THEMSELVES OF THE QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCE OF THE TEACHING STAFF. THEY SHOULD APPLY FAIR AND TRANSPARENT PROCESSES FOR THE RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE TEACHING STAFF.

The Institutions and their academic units have a major responsibility as to the standard of their teaching staff providing them with a supportive environment that promotes the advancement of their scientific work. In particular, the academic unit should:

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

Study Programme Compliance

The Department follows carefully the established legal and scientific procedures for hiring the staff and attributing the charges of teaching and other academic responsibilities according to the staff's respective expertise. It recognizes, consistently throughout the different activities, the importance of both teaching and research as well as the importance of maintaining a strong link between the two; it also encourages initiatives aimed at further implementing this link. In their teaching, in particular in courses related to their expertise, professors often nourish the lessons through knowledge coming from their own research as well as from the research in the respective field more broadly. Postgraduate and doctoral students are also to some extent implied into teaching activities at the undergraduate level.

As a consequence of the increase, in the last years, of dynamism in the research carried out by the members of the department, the QS 2023 (world ranking of Universities, specifically ranking by subject) included for the first time the Faculty of Theology (Athens) among the 140 best academic institutions in the world in the area of Divinity, Religion, and Religious Studies, in the position (101-140) – close to the one of the Faculty of Theology at the University of Thessaloniki. Within Europe, the Faculty of Theology in Athens belongs to the top 60-65 Study Programmes in the above area in the QS 2023.

The Department encourages the professional development of its members thanks to part-time (few- or many month-) sabbaticals and traveling in order to participate in scientific conferences and establish scientific partnerships with other academic institutions and with educational, cultural, and religious organizations in Greece and abroad. These relationships constitute a plus for teaching as they also introduce an input from outside (applied areas of theology) to teaching. There is also a significant in- and out-international mobility of the teaching staff.

The teaching staff, the Study Programme, and the specific courses are regularly evaluated by students and their comments are seriously taken into consideration. The rate of students who participate in these evaluations is not high, but the EEAP acknowledges that this is most often the case across many departments, faculties, universities, and countries.

The teaching workload varies across staff members from appropriate to high, and the additional charges for institutional administration and service are not negligible. The Department members are well aware of these elements and already consider ways to attenuate this workload; for instance, through a future reorganization of the curriculum in order to simplify the teaching offer and its visibility, and to diminish the number of courses taken in charge by each professor. In addition, the opening of a permanent branch of ΕΛΚΕ/ELKE (Special Account for Research Funds/Grants) within the building of the Faculty of Theology will reduce a significant amount of time previously dedicated in within-the-city travelling.

The academic staff of the Department is also well aware of the fact that they need to re-develop in the future a research strategy focusing on specific scientific areas, especially given the fact that in the next years about ten (10) professors (out of the current 22) will retire.

The Department applies a non-negligible, especially compared to the past, diversity of methods of teaching and methods of evaluation. Furthermore, there exists an extensive use of new technologies in teaching, strictly speaking, but also in other teaching-related or teaching oriented activities, i.e., in all academic activities within the building (e.g., public lessons, symposia, expert meetings, bibliographic resources access), a building that has benefited from a spectacular and technologically up-to-date renovation in the very last years.

Finally, the EEAP wants to applaud the current initiative in preparation, i.e., to add a new international curriculum at the undergraduate level to the already existing international curriculum (in English) at the postgraduate level.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Further internationalization in research/publications:

The inclusion of the Department in the QS 2023, joining thus the Faculty of Theology in Thessaloniki in the same ranking, is a nice accomplishment and an important step. Solidifying in the future this inclusion and improving the current position, hopefully even aiming to become a leading department of Orthodox Christian tradition in Europe, request an intensification of research and publication record in accordance with the current international standards. This mainly implies: (a) more publications by most/all members in international peer-review journals and/or volumes, thus reaching a wise balance between publishing for a Greek audience and stakeholders and publishing internationally with impact in the Orthodox and broader Christian worlds and beyond them; and (b) stronger investment in international scientific societies and conferences not only of the broad Orthodox world, but also of the respective theological subfields, which typically gather scholars across Christian traditions and eventually beyond them. Strengthening this dynamic will generate many benefits for everyday teaching, the students' out-mobility, and the future attraction of high-qualified candidates for the academic positions to be opened.

Notes: Post-Covid-19 developments (e.g., more hybrid or virtual conferences and symposia) will facilitate the aforementioned point (b), which means much less expenses. Internal mutual mentoring and collaboration, within the spirit of the high collegiality already present, as well as simplification of the existing program, will facilitate point (a).

The academic staff's continuous familiarization with and training in ongoing educational/pedagogic developments:

Beyond the above-mentioned technological developments and welcome diversity in teaching and evaluation methods, it will be of great benefit if the Department's teaching staff is continuously informed about and trained — possibly in connection with broader initiatives by the University in general and the Education Department and Laboratories — on ongoing developments in theory and practice as today advanced by the educational sciences specifically oriented not to future teachers of religion but to academic professors. To give few examples of these topics: continuous evaluation of the students' progress during the semester, new ways to implement the consideration of students as active and autonomous partners in learning, pair feedback in the students' work and assignments, flipped classroom, team of teachers varying in perspectives (e.g., discipline, faith tradition, culture, methodology), and many others.

Principle 6: Learning Resources and Student Support

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD HAVE ADEQUATE FUNDING TO COVER TEACHING AND LEARNING NEEDS. THEY SHOULD –ON THE ONE HAND– PROVIDE SATISFACTORY INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES FOR LEARNING AND STUDENT SUPPORT AND –ON THE OTHER HAND– FACILITATE DIRECT ACCESS TO THEM BY ESTABLISHING INTERNAL RULES TO THIS END (E.G. LECTURE ROOMS, LABORATORIES, LIBRARIES, NETWORKS, BOARDING, CAREER AND SOCIAL POLICY SERVICES ETC.).

Institutions and their academic units must have sufficient funding and means to support learning and academic activity in general, so that they can offer to students the best possible level of studies. The above means could include facilities such as libraries, study rooms, educational and scientific equipment, information and communications services, support or counselling services.

When allocating the available resources, the needs of all students must be taken into consideration (e.g. whether they are full-time or part-time students, employed or international students, students with disabilities) and the shift towards student-centred learning and the adoption of flexible modes of learning and teaching. Support activities and facilities may be organised in various ways, depending on the institutional context. However, the internal quality assurance ensures that all resources are appropriate, adequate, and accessible, and that students are informed about the services available to them.

In delivering support services the role of support and administrative staff is crucial and therefore they need to be qualified and have opportunities to develop their competences.

Study Programme Compliance

The Dean and the Department's members and staff offered to the EEAP a tour in the Faculty facilities: The building, lecture halls, conference rooms, the Library, the Live Streaming Multi Media Rooms, the three Laboratories, the Centre of Sinaitic Studies, the Chapel of the Faculty, the Museum of the Faculty of Theology, the open-air theatre, the students' free -time areas, and selected offices of the Department's members. The whole building complex is now completely free of any graffiti and posters – contrary to the deplorable condition of the other buildings of the NCUA.

The EEAP clearly observed and acknowledged that the Department has invested huge amounts of money to renovate the infrastructure of the building and the facilities of the Faculty, in order to improve the learning experience with well-equipped and updated learning tools and help students enjoy and profit a lot from the time spent at the Faculty. With the same objective, the Department regularly plans support academic activities, such as conferences, trips, cultural events, and many other actions. All these resources and activities are well advertised and communicated to all students through various means, electronic or otherwise.

The Secretariat is open to the public and students on a daily basis. Online support is available, and the overall work is processed mostly electronically. The Library is in good condition and equipped with many computers and adequate furniture for teaching and research. The Library has ca. 120.000 volumes and a range of digital theological resources available to students and teaching staff. Had the Department better financial resources, it could make more new

acquisitions every year. The electronic catalogue of the Library is very helpful. Students and the Department's members expressed their satisfaction from the support the Library offers to their study and research.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

None.

Principle 7: Information Management

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

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

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

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

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

Working under the framework established by the central services of the University and also using the facilities, platforms, surveys, and other tools provided by these services, in addition to the Department's own initiatives and activities, the Department collects, analyses, and takes into account for reconsideration and decision all kinds of data referring to all aspects of the education, success, and progress as well as all targets and all sources of information as detailed in Principle 7.

Although the University's forms sometimes appear too exhaustive in terms of (too much) information collected, which does not always facilitate the comparative focus on the primary importance of data and information, the Department is successfully proactive in making the appropriate analyses, including the key comparative analyses (e.g., between academic years, between the Programme's levels and years, between subpopulations), by also focusing on main or evocative trends and by using graphs. The collection and analysis of this information are systematic, regular, and with internal coherence, and not occasional or made in a purely impressionistic way.

The new website of the Department constitutes an excellent accomplishment, not only in showing and successfully advertising the planned academic and other scientific activities, but also by integrating all the relevant pieces of information regarding the curriculum, as well as all

the useful information regarding staff, logistics, learning resources, and all kinds of services provided by the Department. Having in addition the website in both Greek and English gives to the attractivity of the Department and its service to students a significant plus-value, emphasizing its international orientation and perspective. This is also accentuated by the inclusion of a specific section in the website's menu, a section dedicated to in-/out-mobility and the openness to the world.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

None.

Principle 8: Public Information

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

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

The Department publishes information about the academic qualifications, which is accurate, objective, up-to-date and very accessible. Information about the activities of the department is useful for prospective students, graduates, and any other interested parties.

We are very pleased to report that the Department's platform is connected to the general one of the NKUA, while the provision of information is the most appropriate. The website is of high-level quality as it should ideally be and is available in both languages, English and Greek, including the complete biographies of the current teaching staff. All this shows an excellent progress since the last evaluation of 2013.

Worth noting is also the presence of the Department on the LinkedIn platform, which helps to a more intensive connection with other social media and the professional world and provides accurate information for a broader audience.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

None.

Principle 9: On-going Monitoring and Periodic Internal Review of Programmes

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD HAVE IN PLACE AN INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM FOR THE AUDIT AND ANNUAL INTERNAL REVIEW OF THEIR PROGRAMMES, SO AS TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVES SET FOR THEM, THROUGH MONITORING AND AMENDMENTS, WITH A VIEW TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT. ANY ACTIONS TAKEN IN THE ABOVE CONTEXT SHOULD BE COMMUNICATED TO ALL PARTIES CONCERNED.

Regular monitoring, review and revision of study programmes aim to maintain the level of educational provision and to create a supportive and effective learning environment for students.

The above comprise the evaluation of:
- *the content of the programme in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up to date;*
- *the changing needs of society;*
- *the students' workload, progression and completion;*
- *the effectiveness of the procedures for the assessment of students;*
- *the students' expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme;*
- *the learning environment, support services and their fitness for purpose for the programme*

Programmes are reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders. The information collected is analysed and the programme is adapted to ensure that it is up-to-date. Revised programme specifications are published.

Study Programme Compliance

The Department has introduced a robust process of an internal evaluation that takes place annually through its internal evaluation team (OMEA) in close collaboration with the quality assurance unit (MODIP) of the University of Athens. This is because it firmly believes that this process will enable it to implement curricular revisions in its undergraduate programme of studies and improve in various other domains (e.g., research, administration, internationalization). Hence, the department adheres vigorously to the guidelines for internal self-assessment and quality assurance and provides extensive reports of these internal evaluations that take place regularly. The collaboration between all these bodies seems to be very productive and harmonious, which is utterly beneficial for the Department.

The EEAP was very satisfied to hear that almost 80 percent of the recommendations of the previous evaluation of 2013 have been implemented in the meantime by the Department. It should also be mentioned that following a new law regulation of 2022 students can also be members of such an internal evaluation team (OMEA) in the future. This change reflects, among other things, the acknowledgement that the overall needs confronting the students and their various sensibilities have to be taken more seriously into account for the improvement of the Department in every respect.

The EEAP notes with satisfaction that the Department has fully endorsed the logic of the internal evaluation process as an absolutely necessary and beneficial one and has made impressive steps towards its amelioration in the last years.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

None.

Principle 10: Regular External Evaluation of Undergraduate Programmes

PROGRAMMES SHOULD REGULARLY UNDERGO EVALUATION BY COMMITTEES OF EXTERNAL EXPERTS SET BY HAHE, AIMING AT ACCREDITATION. THE TERM OF VALIDITY OF THE ACCREDITATION IS DETERMINED BY HAHE.

HAHE is responsible for administrating the programme accreditation process which is realised as an external evaluation procedure, and implemented by a committee of independent experts. HAHE grants accreditation of programmes, with a specific term of validity, following to which revision is required. The accreditation of the quality of the programmes acts as a means of verification of the compliance of the programme with the template's requirements, and as a catalyst for improvement, while opening new perspectives towards the international standing of the awarded degrees.

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

The first external evaluation of the Department in 2013 seems to have had impact on it and led it to make appropriate changes and improve the areas of weakness. It seems that the suggestions and recommendations made by the Evaluation Committee in 2013 have been taken into serious consideration by the Department resulting in subsequent changes.

The Department has committed itself to apply new methods of teaching and learning, the better organization of its facilities and services, and many other things. Methods of digital teaching and learning have now been adopted due to the evolution of technology and the electronic means of communication.

The establishment of a network with the Department's alumni or the reinforcement of bonds with external stakeholders and social partners is still missing, but is seriously put into the future plans of the Department's evolution. However, the many efforts already made by the Department in this direction must be fully acknowledged.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

None.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I.   Features of Good Practice

- Impressive and continuous working on the improvement of the infrastructure of the Faculty (renovation of the building complex, establishing new areas and facilities, etc.)
- Success of the academic staff to gain greater international visibility (QS)
- Adequate response to global challenges facing theological studies in the contemporary academic environment
- High mobility of the Department's professors and regular hosting of visiting professors from abroad
- Collaboration of the Department with theological faculties around the world, together with its openness to the Orthodox and the wider Christian world and society more broadly (e.g., organizations of social care, different educational institutions)
- The high level of the IT services
- Team spirit and enthusiastic commitment to continuously improve the Department

II.   Areas of Weakness

- Insufficient participation of the students in the formation of the Study Programme
- Limited e-class possibilities
- Low international mobility of students
- Insufficient ratio of international publications
- Non-updated use of further instrumental education by the teaching staff

III.   Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- Increase the students' inclusion in decision making concerning the curriculum
- Widen the e-class possibilities
- Promote international mobility of students and find solutions to eventual obstacles
- Motivate the teaching staff to publish in international outlets
- Update the use of pedagogical methods by the teaching staff

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: **1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10.**

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **5.**

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are: **None.**

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

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

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname   **Signature**

1. **Prof. Predrag Dragutinović**
   University of Belgrade, Belgrade, Serbia (Chair)

2. **Prof. Vassilis Saroglou**
   Université Catholique de Louvain, Louvain-la-Neuve, Belgium

3. **Prof. Vasilios N. Makrides**
   University of Erfurt, Erfurt, Germany

4. **Prof. Jack Khalil**
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5. **Ms. Apostolia Kefala**
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