



**ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ**  
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



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**Accreditation Report**  
**for the Undergraduate Study Programme of:**  
**Primary Education**  
**Institution: National and Kapodistrian University of Athens**  
**Date: 22 May 2021**

Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the Undergraduate Study Programme of **Primary Education** 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 **Primary Education** 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. Prof. Athanasios Gagatsis (Chair)**  
University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus
- 2. Prof. Wassilios Baros**  
Paris Lodron University of Salzburg, Austria
- 3. Prof. Panayota Gounari**  
University of Massachusetts Boston, USA
- 4. Prof. Eleni Katsarou**  
College of Education University of Illinois Chicago, USA

## II. Review Procedure and Documentation

The accreditation of the Primary Education Undergraduate Program at the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens (NKUA) was conducted fully in a remote mode, using the Zoom teleconferencing tool, due to restrictions associated with the global Covid-19 pandemic. The Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (HAHE) provided the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel (EEAP) members with a packet of materials ahead of the review process that included: the Department's Accreditation Proposal, a Quality Assurance Policy document for the Undergraduate Program, the Undergraduate Student Guide, documentation on the legal framework, policy and bylaws governing the undergraduate program, course descriptions, Quality Goal Setting, and Quality Data for the period 2015-2019, as well as a wealth of supportive material and appendices. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel further examined the department's website that contained important information about the curriculum, coursework, enrolment, announcements, a video with facilities, classrooms, and buildings. The EEA Panel was also provided with HAHE's accreditation guidelines and was invited to attend an orientation session before the accreditation visit.

The EEAP met as a group on Zoom before the accreditation, on 5/15 to plan ahead, coordinate division of work and process to be followed, and discuss any issues that emerged from the preliminary study of the material received by HAHE.

The virtual accreditation visit extended over three days, starting on Monday May 17<sup>th</sup>. On the first day, we met with Prof. Dimitris Karadimas, Vice Rector for Academic Affairs and President of MODIP, and Prof. Konstantinos Skordoulis, Head of the Department of Primary Education for an introductory session. We, then, met with OMEA and MODIP representatives to discuss compliance to the Quality Standards for Accreditation. On the second day of our visit, we met with faculty members, and later, with current students at different points in their degrees. Finally, we were given a virtual tour through an interactive URL and map, in order to evaluate facilities and material infrastructure. During that same session we had the opportunity to meet with Ms. Evgenia Georgiou-Karavana who is the head of the Department's secretariat. Our virtual visit concluded on May 19<sup>th</sup> with a meeting with alumni and a teleconference with social partners. We concluded the visit with meetings with OMEA and MODIP representatives and the Department Head and Vice Rector of Academic Affairs. From the very beginning, the Department welcomed us with warmth, collegiality and openness and they were all eager to answer our questions and address our concerns. Their presentations were informative, emphasizing the University's commitment to quality improvement in teaching, research and community outreach.

From our interactions and conversations with representatives of the department, leadership, faculty members and administrative staff, current students and alumni as well as community partners we recognized that the Department takes its commitment to quality assurance seriously and is constantly working towards more compliance to the HAHE quality standards.

In closing, the EEAP would like to note the challenges of conducting an accreditation virtually. Despite the flawless organization of the virtual visit on the part of our hosts, we feel that an on-site visit would have given us a much better sense of the work that is taking place, would have done justice to the Department's achievements, and would have given the Panel more opportunities for formal and informal conversations.

### III. Study Programme Profile

The Department of Primary Education was founded in the academic year 1984-1985, following the conversion of 2-year Pedagogical Academies (Παιδαγωγικές Ακαδημίες) that, until then had the charge to prepare and train public school teachers, into four-year degree awarding institutions of higher education. The mostly-vocational character of these academies radically shifted to meet the parameters and standards of a four-year undergraduate degree that has the following aims: to foster and promote educational sciences through applied teaching and research; to provide graduates the necessary competences and skills that ensure their exceptional education for scholarly and professional careers; and to contribute towards addressing and resolving education issues in general. In addressing this mission, the Primary Education Undergraduate Program has designed and developed a curriculum that extends to 8 semesters (or four years) and is made up of forty-nine (49) courses. Thirty (30) courses are required, seven (7) are mandatory electives and twelve (12) are elective. The curriculum structure follows the ECTS system.

The Department comprises five divisions:

- Division of Sciences of Education
- Division of Special Education and Psychology
- Division of Humanities
- Division of Mathematics and Informatics
- Division of Physical Sciences, Technology and Environmental Studies

Eleven labs are also hosted in the Department. The Department comprises twenty-four faculty members, twelve EDIP members, one EEP member, and seven contracted external collaborators; one head administrator and twelve administrative staff members. It also employs forty post-doctoral students and PhD candidates as unpaid supportive lab staff. It currently has 2,552 students enrolled, with approximately 400 new incoming students enrolling every year. The student/faculty ratio is 75:1, while graduation rate is at 75% with an average 8.1 cumulative GPA.

The department's facilities, including faculty and staff offices and classrooms expand to four different buildings in the centre of Athens.

The Department focuses on the design and delivery of high-quality education programs adhering to an orientation and policies that support continuous improvement. The curriculum was revised after the 2013 External Evaluation and the ensuing recommendations, to meet the needs of 21<sup>st</sup> century education. The curriculum is consistent with best practices in teacher education, including a focus in the synergy of theory and practice, student-centered curricula and scaffolding knowledge, rich field experiences and well-structured Practica in a network of 130 primary school classrooms, and an orientation towards reflective practice. The ultimate goal of the Department is to prepare professional educators who understand the complexity of contemporary educational phenomena and are ready to apply the science of learning in a variety of educational settings.

## 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 realize 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 organization 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 labor 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 quality policy of the undergraduate program of the Primary Education Undergraduate Program is aligned with that of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. The program's quality assurance procedures are monitored by the University's Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP). In general, the Quality Assurance Policy aims to support the academic content and scientific orientation of the undergraduate program in accordance with international academic standards and the current national legislation. To that extent, there is a policy in place for improving the educational experience of undergraduate students, the quality and quantity of the overall research output of the department, as well as the introduction of innovative teaching and practical training approaches and strategies. Furthermore, such policy extends to

the continual monitoring and improvement of human resources, curricula, outreach, mobility and program visibility.

The Program has set three strategic quality goals that can be summarized as follows: i) Academic development and improvement of the program of study/curriculum quality (this includes improving graduation and achievement rates, increasing elective course options, strengthening the quality of learning experience, internalization/student mobility, support and development of faculty) ii) Improvement of research track record iii) Improving the connections with society at large, and improve the department's visibility.

The main dimensions of the Department's quality assurance policy revolve around:

- The design, development and implementation of curricula through a transparent and inclusive process, that engender and promote quality and meet scientific and educational demands.
- The effectiveness of learning experience; exploring pedagogical approaches and teaching strategies that best meet the needs of the students; fostering student-centered and individualized learning; streamlining of the Practicum and support of students through the Practicum Office.
- Monitor and support of student progress; providing student support and make resources available; encourage collaborations with students and participation in mobility programs.
- Recruit and retain highly qualified faculty and evaluate their work yearly; support and encourage the production of research work by members of the department, that meets high academic standards; encourage and support faculty in attending scholarly activities such as conferences, research networks and grant projects.
- Connection between teaching and research and development of initiatives that disseminate research findings at all levels of public-school education; school and community outreach.
- Providing professional opportunities and lifelong learning to alumni
- Ongoing evaluation and upgrading by revisiting the Quality Assurance system in place built in the fruitful collaboration between OMEA.

Overall, the EEAP finds the quality assurance action plan of the department satisfactory and in compliance with the recommendations of the 2013 External Evaluation report. In particular, the quality assurance processes are coordinated and supervised by OMEA in collaboration with the MODIP of the institution. Valuable feedback is being obtained on a continual basis from the program's relevant committees, the department meetings, the analysis of student evaluation reports, as well as the engagement of various stakeholders from the school network system.

Based on extensive evaluation of the various documentation presented, the EEAP finds it commendable that the OMEA developed a realistic action plan to address the recommendations identified during the 2013 External Evaluation. Specifically, all ten of the comments/suggestions of the external evaluation committee were addressed in a timely, straightforward, and honest manner, including: (i) revising the curriculum to meet the needs a demands of a 21<sup>st</sup> century education that included adding Research Methodology and Statistics courses; (ii) expanding the Practicum experience throughout students' program of study; (iii) hiring three new faculty



members in order to improve the faculty to student ratio; (iv) establishing two new computer labs to address the need to upgrade IT infrastructure; and (e) offering workshops and pre-practica to support future educators in issues of bullying and school victimization, such as the outreach project "School Bullying: psycho-pedagogical interventions and practices." The EEAP would like to note the University's responsiveness to the evaluation recommendations.

### Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 1: Academic Unit Policy for Quality Assurance</b>	
Fully compliant	√
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 organization, 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 labor 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 Undergraduate Primary Education Program of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens was established as a four-year program during the reforms in the institutions of Higher Learning the early 1980s and was designed in accordance with the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education. The program of study was formally revised in 2015-16, in response to new and important developments in the field, the internal evaluation process of 2010-11, the developments of the last decade's economic and labour market crises, and critically, it was based on reports provided by the different divisions that drew feedback from faculty and course requirements, student feedback, and close alignment with the European Course Credits System (ECTS). The main characteristics of the Program are a) the connection of scientific knowledge with professional development b) the connection between general fields of knowledge to more specialized fields, c) an interdisciplinary approach and d) multidisciplinary.

Students attend classes at the university and conduct their fieldwork and student teaching experiences for a total of eight semesters, that include 49 courses, of which 30 are required, 7 are elective form a designated pool, and 12 are free electives. These courses, along with the required fieldwork experiences comprise the 240 ECTS that lead to the diploma (undergraduate degree).

It is important to note that the program of study, as it is articulated and implemented by the faculty and administration, exhibits a significant scaffolding approach of teaching, learning, and assessment. This is engendered in the emphasis on a rigorous theoretical knowledge base in all academic/content areas, that gradually transitions students into deepened pedagogical understanding and areas of expertise in classroom and other educational contexts.

The updated Practicum is core and foundational element of the curriculum, and, in its new structure, it extends in three phases starting in the 2<sup>nd</sup> year. Students in small groups begin their practical and pedagogical approaches by observing teachers in pre-selected school sites in the third semester of their studies, culminating in the fifth and sixth semesters with more sustained observations, that total 130 clock hours, and with micro-teaching opportunities that are attached to select methodological and content courses. For the seventh and eighth semesters, students, while attending several university content area courses, also conduct fieldwork assignments, especially designed for the educational context. Small groups in student-selected schools, lead to numerous observational and debriefing sessions on site, and eventually progress in planning and implementing their own lessons for the last semester, culminating in two weeks of sustained teaching of all the content areas. In this last phase, EDIP members, PhD candidates and seconded educators serve as coordinators and student-teacher mentors.

While these are sufficiently designed and assessed fieldwork experiences, and the number of student placements required and the number of schools and classrooms needed are exceedingly high, the challenge remains in identifying, training, and engaging in sustained relationships with qualified mentor teachers in public school classrooms that espouse and practice the central tenets of the program, especially those that have been identified as critical (see above).

It follows that in semester 7 and 8, students plan and teach for, a) a sustained period of time in classrooms (the current two days a week instead of five may be enhanced accordingly); b) a complete unit of study or thematic unit, in accordance with local curricular demands, and ; c) are given the opportunity to plan, teach, and assess elementary school students, also with a sharp focus on existing curricular demands of the school site, and their own interpretations of university coursework tenets. The above, could serve as the beginning or establishing of an assessment program for the matriculation and passage into the profession of teaching (πτυχιακή εργασία).

Still focusing attention on fieldwork and student teaching, it is necessary that students are observed and assessed in *significant* (number of times per semester and qualified supervisors) and *transparent* (records of observations kept for faculty, student and mentor teacher access) ways. It may be prudent to establish a *locally determined evaluation instrument/tool* that could also be shared across the six fieldwork semesters and across sites (i.e., both at the university and the practicum schools).

Given that this is a large, urban university program, and given the multiple and varied linguistic and cultural backgrounds of students in public schools, it is essential that *three* central ideas that are, indeed, themes in the mission of the program and are being discussed among faculty namely, *Multilingual/Multicultural Education, Critical Pedagogy, and Language Learning*, including notions of translanguaging, language development and biliteracy could a) be weaved across disciplines and courses in the later semesters and designed field experiences and b) have stand-alone courses in the early semesters to prepare student-teachers to teach the increasingly diverse population in Greek public schools.

The EEAP notes that that during meetings, some interesting projects addressing, for example, refugee populations in Greece were identified (i.e. SPIN4rest project, also praised during our

meeting with students). These seem to be isolated initiatives and not a core element of the curriculum. In this sense, there is a curricular gap for both expertise and courses that would engage school communities in collaborative teaching and research activities that will lead to academic publications, external funding, professional development for teachers, and policy change. A strong component on pedagogies and their applications within minoritized communities and school settings with bilingual/multilingual/multicultural students would significantly enrich and strengthen the program of study.

Given the social justice and critical pedagogy orientation of the department, it would be important a) to make curricular changes to prepare students/future educators to enter multilingual/multicultural classrooms and to be able to address their students' linguistic, academic and sociocultural needs and b) to the extent possible, have students observe and engage with seasoned practitioners that teach in critical ways, as well as co-plan and co-teach cross-disciplinary units of study.

In examining the five different Divisions the EEAP would like to encourage the Program to consider explicit ways for building cooperation between the Division of Mathematics and Informatics and the Division of Physical Sciences, Technology and Environmental Studies. One way to do this would be to examine similar programs under STEM umbrella and explore their applicability in the Program's context. This would be in line with current approaches internationally in the field.

### Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 2: Design and Approval of Programmes</b>	
Fully compliant	√
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### Panel Recommendations

The EAAP noted a curricular gap for expertise and coursework that would prepare future educators to address their students' linguistic, academic and sociocultural needs in increasingly diverse classrooms. This orientation would further contribute to engaging school communities in collaborative teaching and research activities that would lead to academic publications, external funding, professional development for teachers, and policy change. Given the social justice and critical pedagogy orientation of the department, it would be important to make curricular changes to prepare students/future educators to enter multilingual/multicultural classrooms.

### Principle 3: Student- centered 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-centered 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-centered 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 Panel was provided with the opportunity to hold Zoom meetings with program faculty, current students, and recent graduates. Without exception, the message was very clear as to the commitment that is espoused and amply practiced, to a student-centered pedagogical approach that focuses on rigor, inter-disciplinary practical and research skills, as well as the development of critical and metacognitive learning, and reflective processes. Students are required to plan, present, and teach in situ (in schools and other contexts) micro-lessons; design numerous pedagogical applications in remote learning sessions; participate in literature and theatre seminars. Within the teaching and learning context at the university, students are encouraged to partake in group learning activities, tutoring sessions, and self and cooperative evaluation.

The re-articulation of the fieldwork experiences was approved by the program faculty during AY 2015-16, was fully implemented during the following AY (2016-17), and with gradual modifications and improvements, it is realized in its current form: Field experience is required, it is equivalent to 14 ECTS and as of AY 2015-16, students participate in numerous teaching and learning contexts that commence at the second year of study (as opposed to the previous third year), and that culminate in the fourth year more extensive fieldwork and student teaching experiences. While this re-articulation and realization is significant in honouring the primacy of field and student teaching experiences future educators, it may be advisable to increase the number of ECTS credits in order to lend more credence and importance to the fieldwork, as well offer more sustained and involved practical experiences (see also principle #2).

The assessment of students is conducted with technological (i.e., surveys/questionnaires) and other methods that rest on individual professors' course goals and standards. Drawing on student-centered approaches, a large percentage of courses (87%) has a required or optional student paper component. In smaller classes there are a lot more options and possibilities for developing student papers and inquiries. As mentioned elsewhere (principle #2) there appears to be a real concern as to a more standardized means or the existence/design of a tool for the assessment of students, especially with regard to their fieldwork experiences and professional knowledge and understanding. It would be highly advisable that such a process could begin as well as bring to fruition a locally determined tool, that will serve both students and faculty more significantly and with confidence as to the desired professionalism of the graduates. This is especially pertinent with regard to the exceedingly high faculty/student ratio (75:1), a claim that is evidenced by the small number of full-time faculty, a large number of graduate students and volunteers conducting major work for the assessment of students in the program, and in the lack of instructional space that would be conducive to real student-centered and cooperative learning.

### Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 3: Student- centered Learning, Teaching and Assessment</b>	
Fully compliant	√
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### Panel Recommendations

None.

## 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

This section draws from the following material: The Department's Accreditation Proposal, the Undergraduate Student Guide, the Department's website, and our virtual meetings with faculty, students and alumni. It is clear to the EEAP that one of the Department's strengths, despite the large number of students, is the collaboration of faculty and students. Students and alumni referred to the Department as their "home," and their "family" commenting on the humanity and accessibility of their professors and their respect for students' personalities, as well as their willingness to support students in their careers and academic pursuits. Students and alumni commended faculty's efforts to include them in research projects, conferences, co-authored papers, opportunities for European mobility programs, etc. Finally, students seemed satisfied with information provided to them on their progress in the program, and access to professors with academic and other questions.

Students enter the program through national examinations, and/or through a placement test, if they are already enrolled in a different department. New incoming students are supported from the beginning of their studies through an informative welcome orientation session offered by the Rector, the Department Head and faculty members and staff, where the organization and operation of the Department and its support services, the Curriculum, course of study and Practicum are presented in detail. In these meetings, students are also informed about the structure of their studies per academic semester, the evaluation process, e-services, the Program Erasmus+ and other available programs. Students are further informed at the beginning of every academic semester about the evaluation process in their courses by the course instructor. Evaluation processes are delineated on the syllabi and course shell on the electronic platform.

Updated information is posted in the Department's website, including courses schedules, announcements etc. Students can also refer to the Student Handbook for degree requirements and milestones.

Students are not assigned individual advisors, which can be understood, given the ratio between students and faculty (75:1). On any given year, the number of new incoming students is far higher than the one requested by the Department (180 are requested with the final number of

incoming students rounding up every year in the high 300s to 400s). However, both from our discussions with students and in the Program’s proposal, it becomes clear that faculty go above and beyond their minimum responsibilities to hold regular office hours, making themselves accessible even on weekends.

Since a large number of students come from the humanities and social sciences, the Department provides further support with Tutoring (frontistirio) for science and math courses, in order to ensure that students have covered the content needed.

Finally, the reported 75% graduation rate with an average cumulative GPA of 8.1 illustrates a successful progress monitoring process in place.

A good number of students from the Program have been participating in European mobility programs such as conducting their Practica abroad and the Erasmus+. The majority of current students who met with the EEAP were Erasmus participants and greatly appreciative of this unique experience.

Finally, students have the option to receive the Diploma Supplement in Greek and English by submitting a request to the Department’s Secretariat.

### Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 4: Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification</b>	
Fully compliant	√
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### Panel Recommendations.

When the Department achieves a good balance in the professor-to-student ratio, it will be worth considering individual advisors to students.



## 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 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.*

### Study Programme Compliance

The Primary Education Undergraduate Program comprises twenty-four faculty members, twelve EDIP members, one EEP member and seven contracted external collaborators/consultants. These faculty members bring diverse and much-needed expertise and research interests to the Program and its curriculum. In order to meet the Program's curricular needs, the Department also recruits doctoral candidates and post-docs without pay to support student Practica. There is a fair balance in the academic ranking ratio between female and male professors.

Between 2012 and 2019 the Department lost 17 lines or 41,5% of its human resources to retirement. Three new lines were given back, with one more pending. Another two lines will be advertised in the next few years. It seems that, despite the new hires, the needed balance has not been achieved yet, with faculty holding heavy course loads, beyond their minimum responsibilities, including junior faculty taking on massive service obligations (such as the Practicum) and that any lines will be fundamental in offering a quality curriculum while maintaining a workload balance between faculty. Also, the same faculty support Master's and PhD students, overseeing dissertations and theses, making their workload extremely heavy.

Lines are deliberated and decided at the Department's general assembly and in the context of the legal framework shaping hiring in Higher Education in Greece. Delays between the hiring decision and the actual contract that would allow faculty to teach are, at times, exorbitant (we heard the case of a faculty member who was hired in 2017 but her paperwork was not completed until late 2020—a responsibility that falls on the Ministry of Education).

Given the new lines given to the Department since 2013, it is clear that the hiring process is transparent and conducted on the basis of curricular needs, required expertise, and following what the legal framework stipulates for new lines.

Newer and untenured faculty reported positive experiences in the Department both in terms of information and support. Faculty also reported that, after their hiring, they met with the Department Head, Rector and Provost who relayed different kinds of information regarding the Department, courses, policies and processes, curriculum and vision as well as technological infrastructure, access to electronic resources and the library, mobility programs (such as Horizon). Faculty also stressed that there is collaboration between the different divisions and many co-authored projects between faculty members. The Department does not currently have a formal mentoring process for new incoming faculty. It would be beneficial to officialise and expand on what they are already doing unofficially, in order to support junior faculty. A formal mentoring process would create clarity regarding expectations in terms of teaching, scholarship and service to the Department, would give credit to mentors and would create a fairer division of labor to the degree that is possible, given the limited human resources.

Faculty and their courses are evaluated every semester through the use of course evaluations. A questionnaire and an analysis of the results were provided to the EEAP (per Appendix B7). Overall, the evaluations are very positive. Addressing a recommendation from the 2013 external evaluation, the Department is not relying only on course evaluations, but they also use alternative qualitative ways to evaluate course effectiveness throughout the semester, such as in-class presentations, portfolios, student papers and lab work.

The faculty produce impressive scholarly output as noted in the Accreditation Report and evidenced in their online profiles on the Department's official page. They have an important presence in peer-reviewed journals, sit on international journal editorial boards, present in national and international conferences, and produce monographs and edited volumes.

The Department participates in a number of international conferences, despite the limited budget slated for such activities (1600 Euros per person per year). They also participate in programs such Erasmus+, Horizon 2020 (COHERE on tangible and intangible cultural heritage is a consortium of 11 universities), as well as Thales and Aristeia in collaboration with the National Hellenic Research Foundation.

Finally, a good number of faculty are involved in multiple community outreach programs and collaborations with social partners (KETHEA, the intercultural education school in Agios Dimitrios, KESY, Peiramatiko School and School for the Blind, and different municipalities)

## Panel Judgement

Principle 5: Teaching Staff	
Fully compliant	√
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

## Panel Recommendations

- The EEAP notes that while there is an informal support system in place that seems to be working, a more formal mentoring process that commits mentors and mentees would be very useful.
- The EEAP recommends in future hiring and, in line with Principle # 2, to explore identifying expertise that would address the changing public-school character and demographics with the influx of immigrant and refugee students. A suggestion would be to identify expertise in educational linguistics, with a focus on bilingualism/biliteracy, second language development and curriculum development, and pedagogy for minoritized populations; and/or educational and social consequences of ethnic and linguistic diversity at community, national, and international levels.

## 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-centered 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. 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 program faculty, as described in Principle 5, includes 24 faculty members, 10 EDIP members, 1 EEP, and 4 ETEP members. Since 2013, 12 faculty members have retired, 3 new faculty members have joined the department, while the remaining positions stand unfulfilled, and 5 new EDIP members have enriched the program with teaching and fieldwork supervision roles that are critical, given the number of students in the program. Clearly, the high faculty-to-student ratio continues to challenge the program faculty and students, even though there are creative and thoughtful approaches to cover all the operational and research needs. It is imperative to point out therefore, that there is a great need to swiftly proceed with the hiring of teaching faculty in all the areas that the program has foreseen as essential, as well those that the EEAP has outlined elsewhere in this report. A program that enjoys such wide recognition and appeal, as that of the Primary Education at NKUA, requires that both NKUA and the state, examine ways to support and enrich the faculty and the administration in their valiant efforts in addressing subject-specific coursework and new hires. Such attention to new scholars will ultimately enhance the future teachers' pedagogical and critical knowledge in all their academic, research, and practical instantiations.

The administrative arm of the program is comprised of twelve people, and the support staff is responsible for the electronic communication with the students on all operational matters. In our conversation with the head administrator of the Secretariat, she reported that the Department's administrative needs are met with the existing staff. Students are supported in educational and course-oriented issues and are provided by a central service (KLEIDI). Students are also provided with advisory support and informational sessions, both for their course of

study and graduation requirements, as well for individual pursuits of study and research (i.e., Erasmus, volunteerism in high needs third spaces, school sites for fieldwork experiences). It may be of considerable help to all parties concerned, if a small number of student advisors/advocates could be hired. These student advisors/advocates, preferably former students, but also other people with intimate/first-hand knowledge of the graduation requirements, study habits, student concerns, fieldwork school and other site options, might serve a very student-oriented approach and advocacy.

It became very clear when the EEAP met with current students and graduates of the program, that student mobility and third space engagement is highly regarded and encouraged. These are accomplished via the Erasmus project, as well as via a large number of faculty procured projects that provide fantastic scholarly and critical practice opportunities for students.

The EEAP was able to see the building spaces available to the program, virtually and via a number of videos and presentations. By everyone's admission, even though there have been a number of upgrades in the physical spaces and accessibility to newer and more advanced equipment, the absence of contiguous spaces that could establish the spatial, physical, and aesthetic senses of belonging to a campus, is significantly missing.

### Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 6: Learning Resources and Student Support</b>	
Fully compliant	√
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 organization, 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 analyzing 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 analyzing information and planning follow-up activities.*

### Study Programme Compliance

The Department of Primary Education of the University of Athens aims to provide students with theoretical knowledge, research and critical thinking skills, and practical training in Primary education, in accordance with the European and the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education. The EEAP has determined that the Department has established a multidimensional process about its information management that informs internal evaluation as well as external evaluation and accreditation processes. Core in this process is the role of OMEA, the internal evaluation committee made up of faculty members from diverse disciplinary fields within the department. The internal evaluation group (OMEA) collects data through surveys, quantitative and qualitative information from faculty and lab directors regarding the content and instruction mode, research and teaching activities, and community outreach activities. Information collected via all these avenues is used to revise the curriculum, implement novel teaching methods, improve infrastructure and department facilities, facilitate the use of ICTs, the organization of conferences, workshops, invited lectures and so forth.

It was reported that internal evaluations take place regularly and students are asked to provide feedback on their courses and teaching staff every semester. A sample questionnaire was provided to the EEAP for review. Specifically, information is collected and examined on a variety of quality indicators, including the following: follow-up of the course; workload in relation to the study; transparency in grading criteria; faculty guidance and openness; teaching ability and faculty consistency. Further, this information is directly shared with the information system of MODIP.

The Department's website presents the management of data for students, teachers and courses offered. It contains general information such as structure and organization of the program, course statistics, course syllabi, and statistics on graduates from each academic year. Through this platform, students have access to their grades, both for courses they are currently taking, as well as from past semesters. The students, respectively, can confirm their enrolments and monitor their progression in the Program.

Based on statistics (2018-19), the Primary Education Department ranks seventh compared to all departments of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens in terms of student mobility. At the same time, the ERASMUS+ concerning practical training acquisition of professional experience has a high participation, and dynamic growth. In year 2018-19, the Department ranked second among all NKUA Departments in terms of student mobility for the Practicum (21 students). Host institutions for this program include National Schools in European Countries, and the UK.

The students gave feedback to the EEAP indicating that they value and rate very highly the Department of Primary Education information. They also feel the courses prepare them well for the job force and provide a good connection between practice and research. They expressed satisfaction with the variety of the topics offered.

The Alumni who participated in the review with the members of EEAP, expressed a strong connection with the Department and noted that they felt welcomed to participate in educational opportunities (e.g. symposia, conferences, seminars, co-authored papers, PhD programs). They also expressed their enthusiasm for their training in a theoretical, practical and research direction, as well as their study at Universities abroad under the ERASMUS program. As a matter of fact, some graduates continue their careers in Universities abroad as researchers or as postgraduate students, while others work as teachers in public or private schools outside Greece. This was regarded by all interviewed as important since it increased the bond and sense of community among students, as well as faculty and graduates with the potential for future collaborations, teaching opportunities and availability of practical experiences. It was reported that the Department plans to implement a network with alumni and to conduct a survey tracking the career paths of their graduates. The objective of this survey was to develop the necessary attributes for graduates to meet the requirements for their role as teachers in terms of knowledge, attitudes and values that will enable them to exercise their role as professionals. However, the program does not seem to be collecting data on student employability and the career paths of graduates. This would be helpful data regarding the Department's ability to position its graduates, and foster future connections and collaborations.

Overall, the EEAP believes that the frequency of satisfaction surveys and the decisions being made following the analysis of these data is sufficient.

## Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 7: Information Management</b>	
Fully compliant	√
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

## Panel Recommendations

The Department of Primary Education should consider establishing methods for collecting information related to their graduates' job placements and academic careers.



## 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

It is obvious that the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens and the Department of Primary Education have put in place a comprehensive public information system as we deduced through our interviews with the Head of the Department, members of MODIP, OMEA, faculty, secretarial staff and students. The EEAP examined materials provided that exhibited evidence of critical information sharing with students, faculty members, external partners and the community at large. The Department's website in Greek and English language contains information about its facilities, staff, undergraduate and graduate programs and guides, announcements, events, policy of quality assurance, and internal assessment reports. News about awards, as well as the activities of members of the academic community (conferences, workshops, announcements, distinctions, trainings) are also posted on the Department's website. Information of interest to the general public such as invited lectures, workshops, conferences and other events that connect the Department with society is posted on the website of the Department and published in the press. The content of the page is constantly updated including all recent decisions and announcements such as: Approval of Evaluation Committee Practices for the selection of additional staff in the framework of research programs (21-5-2021); Announcement of the election of Dean of the Faculty of Education Sciences (20-5-2021); Scholarships of Greek-French cooperation for higher education in France (18-5-2021); Program of qualifying examinations for the academic year 2020-21 (14-5-2021); Informative webinar of the University Liaison Office (7-5-2021); Scholarships through Wallonie Bruxelles Foundation of Belgium for online seminars of the French language (26-4-2021).

In addition, the Department's website is currently being redesigned in a new more attractive and user-friendly format. The Panel was able to see a preview of the new website that is definitely a great improvement from the existing one. In putting content in the new website, it will be useful if the English version has richer content and more information, especially since the Department is moving in the direction of internationalization of curriculum and research. In addition, it would be useful to have more detailed individual profiles for faculty and staff. Finally, the EEAP believes that it would be useful to improve the e-publishing activity of the Department by creating an e-Newsletter. In this way, the thousands of students and alumni of the department, the numerous collaborators and school partners, social partners and the community in general could have more direct information about important educational, research and other cultural activities of the Department.

## Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 8: Public Information</b>	
Fully compliant	√
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

## Panel Recommendations

- The EEAP encourages the Department to develop more fully the English version of their website, particularly as they will soon be launching a brand-new design.
- The EEAP encourages the Department to consider creating an e-Newsletter as a way to maintain contact with student, alumni, schools, social partners and other stakeholders.

## 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 of Primary Education at NKUA draws on the Quality Policy and the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) of the University, giving particular importance to the internal evaluation of courses. There is continuous monitoring and periodic internal evaluation of the Program, as was evident during the interviews with the faculty and internal evaluation committee (MODIP and OMEA) members. OMEA meets at least once a month and systematically monitors quality data on an annual basis. Finally, it draws up annual and periodic evaluation reports and recommendations to the Program Committee and the General Assembly of the PDPE.

Students evaluate the content and the objectives of the course, the organization and quality of teaching (methods, communication, motivational participation of students) and the achievement of the objectives of the course through a survey every semester. However, faculty have also the liberty to use other questionnaires that are more appropriate to their courses. Faculty are in charge of analyzing the results of the questionnaires. Other sources of input for program monitoring and improvement include advancements in the field, shifting social needs, student input and so forth.

It is worth noticing that the program is based on an organization of educational objectives and intended learning outcomes in accordance with the European and National Higher Education Qualifications Framework.

The Department participates in the program "Practical Exercise of Higher Education Students of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens", which is co-financed by the European Union (the European Social Fund) and national resources and is part of the Operational Program "Education & Lifelong Learning", of the Ministry of Education, Research and Religious Affairs. It

is carried out by graduate and fourth-year students in public and private institutions of the country (e.g. public and private schools, museums, etc.).

It was reported that annual internal reports are prepared and shared with the Department of Primary Education's faculty general assembly. They meet regularly to discuss and address issues concerning the effective delivery of instruction for maximum learning benefits of the students. As is the case with other universities in Greece, there is a financial crisis, as well as a discordance between the number of faculty (24 professors 12 EDIP and 7 external collaborators), and the number of students. In addition, there are 11 research and practice laboratories that have been reviewed with the purpose of maintaining their vitality and connection to the practical experiences of students in core subjects.

Quality control is applied on the infrastructure, in which several upgrades were made, while one of the main operating buildings of the Department will be upgraded per the university's.

The program promotes a synergy between teaching and research through a variety of courses and educational activities. More specifically, the curriculum offers the course "Scientific Research Methodology", as a mandatory option. In the course "Management of the School Class & Practical Exercise II" students are required to carry out research work. Research papers are also assigned in the context of selection courses (for example in the course "Life Narratives, Folklore and Education", in Atypical and non-Formal forms of learning in Natural Sciences, etc.). It also promotes some dimensions of formative assessment in teaching and learning. An important initiative of the department is the involvement of undergraduate students in research projects and their participation in international conferences.

Faculty members, including those associated with Research laboratories, have continuing collaborations with external global university partners and providing teaching practice opportunities with a range of local and global agencies. Faculty members are invited by MODIP at regular intervals to complete data relating to their research. It is important to notice the rich "clinical experiences" that the students were offered through the Department's work with the ERASMUS internships and local scholarship/internship programs. The students gave feedback to the EEAP indicating that they value and rate the information management processes highly. They also value highly their continuous support by their support services and through communication with various professional and social bodies. Finally, they are very satisfied by the variety of the teaching topics, and they feel the courses prepare them well for the job and provide a good connection between practice and research.

The EEAP members confirmed through their review of documents and interviews that the Department has in place mechanisms to review essential aspects of program delivery regularly. This practice ensures the highest quality supportive, and effective learning environment for students.

## Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 9: On-going Monitoring and Periodic Internal Review of Programmes</b>	
Fully compliant	√
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

## Panel Recommendations

The Department may want to solicit formative feedback from recent alumni who can engage in the examination of the curriculum and offer recommendations.

## 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 realized 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

In order to investigate the program's compliance with the QA principles and the principles established by HAHE, the EEAP reviewed all available documents and the website of the Department and conducted extensive online interviews with the Vice-Rector for Academic and Student Affairs and President of MODIP, Professor Dimitris Karadimas, the Head of the Department, Professor Konstantinos Skordoulis, members of MODIP, the OMEA moderator Professor Georgia Kalogirou and the members of OMEA, the program's faculty, administrative staff, students, graduates and external stakeholders. The Head of the Department, the heads of the Laboratories and the other staff presented and explained their vision and were willing to share with the EEAP all the documents and information that could make their work visible.

The EEAP confirms that the Department has carefully and respectfully responded to the findings and recommendations listed in the 2013 External Evaluation Report. The value of the external review process to the functioning of both the Department and the undergraduate program is evident in the careful, epistemologically sound, and systemic program review and the changes initiated by MODIP and OMEA which were implemented by the Department. In fact, the introduction of courses on research and Statistical methodology and the enrichment of the students' evaluation procedures, beyond the final semester examination have been adopted. In most subjects, the evaluation includes presentations, individual papers, intermediate work and laboratory exercises. The department has also made valuable efforts on connecting teaching and research, the enhancement of research and publications, as well as the digitization of the Department's communication with students with regular and in time announcements through the website.

On the other hand, the department has also seriously taken into account the enrichment of digital IT infrastructures and two computer laboratories have been upgraded with more stations to house laboratories that required the use of computers. For example, students attend a laboratory course in Statistics using the SPSS.

Additionally, increasing the field experience-practicum work and expanding it to four semesters is the main change that contributed to students' enhancement of skills, self-confidence and

satisfaction as has been apparent during the meetings of EEAP with students and graduates. The department's team responsible for the review of the curriculum proposed the application of students' teaching practice earlier than the 4th year of study. Considering the very large number of students, this change demands a very good organization based on an important number of partner schools and a heavy workload for faculty and EDIP members involved.

The Department has developed and is offering a variety of successful Master's and PhD programs and the revenue from these programs funds a large number of research or teaching activities, such as staff research projects or participation of faculty and undergraduate students in local or international conferences. Students and graduates have expressed their satisfaction about this initiative of the Department. It is also worth noting that students and graduates expressed their respect and satisfaction with the pedagogical approach employed by faculty within and outside the classrooms and the personal guidance they receive. Also, students favourably commented on the supportive and responsive attitude of faculty which they claim has provided them without limits of time and work.

Important changes that open *new perspectives towards the international standing of the awarded degrees* have been implemented but they cannot be completed without an increase in the number of faculty members.

### Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 10: Regular External Evaluation of Undergraduate Programmes</b>	
Fully compliant	√
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### Panel Recommendations

None.

## **PART C: CONCLUSIONS**

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

- The Department provided adequate and prompt responses to, and in some areas exceeded the recommendations of the 2013 External Evaluation.
- There is a high degree of satisfaction, support and enthusiasm for the Department among students, alumni, and external partners and stakeholders, which serves as a testament to the Department's reputation and effectiveness.
- The faculty's hard work in the MA and PhD programs, despite the already heavy workload, generates revenue that allows the department to fund activities, programs, events, conferences including improvements in infrastructure. The department ranks 6<sup>th</sup> among all NKUA departments in generating revenue for the university, a portion of which is funnelled back to the department.
- Department faculty is highly productive, publishing in prestigious venues and engaged in international collaborations that further enhance the visibility of the department and its programs.
- The Department encourages and supports student mobility through different programs, an extremely positive and valuable experience for students.

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

- The exceedingly high faculty/student ratio (75:1) has been well-documented and is affecting all areas of Department life.

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

- Given the identified curricular and expertise gap in the Department and the reality of increasingly diverse (in terms of race, language, culture, ethnicity) classrooms in public schools, there is a vital necessity as well as a social responsibility to prepare future educators to understand, address, and support the linguistic, cultural, social and educational needs of the shifting student population. Towards this goal the department could consider two suggestions. 1) Build the pertinent knowledge and values into multiple courses, as well as develop courses that would bring about, 2) Hire a faculty member who can engage school communities in collaborative teaching and research activities and specializes in pedagogies and their applications within minoritized communities and school settings with bilingual/multilingual/multicultural students.
- The department may want to explore ways to solicit as many faculty members to identify and establish close partnerships with highly selected public-school sites that espouse excellent theory to practice approaches. In these sites, teacher candidates could conduct most fieldwork experiences, especially during their fourth-year student teaching.
- In examining the five different Divisions the EEAP would like to encourage the Program to consider explicit ways for building cooperation between the Division of Mathematics and Informatics and the Division of Physical Sciences, Technology and Environmental Studies. One way to do this would be to examine similar programs under the STEM umbrella and explore their applicability in the Program's context. This would be in line with current approaches internationally in the field.



- One of the areas of disciplinary focus and growth that the Department has identified during our meetings is that of Critical Education, as a way to further strengthen its social justice identity and mission. We concur.
- The department, in its long-term planning could consider replacing the Special Education faculty lines that were lost to retirement. In line with the critical pedagogy/social justice vision, the Department could rethink its approach to Special Education in the context of *Inclusive Education*, in line with international practices and frameworks in this field.
- In accordance with a better balance to the faculty/student ratio, the Department could consider assigning students to individual advisors. As noted in the report, a small number of student advisors/advocates could be hired, preferably former students, but also other people with first-hand knowledge of the graduation requirements, study habits, student concerns, fieldwork school and other site options, and serve a very student-oriented approach and advocacy.
- The Department may want to solicit formative feedback from recent alumni who can engage in the examination of the curriculum and offer recommendations.
- The EEAP encourages the Department to develop more fully the English version of their website, particularly as they will soon be launching a brand-new design.
- The EEAP encourages the Department to consider creating an e-Newsletter as a way to maintain contact with student, alumni, schools, social partners and other stakeholders.

#### IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: **1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 , and 10.**

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

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

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

Overall Judgement	
Fully compliant	√
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

## The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

**Name and Surname**

**Signature**

- 1. Prof. Athanasios Gagatsis (Chair)**  
University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus
- 2. Prof. Panayota Gounari**  
University of Massachusetts Boston, USA
- 3. Prof. Eleni Katsarou**  
College of Education University of Illinois Chicago, USA