Accreditation Report
for the Undergraduate Study Programme of:

Early Childhood Education

Institution: National and Kapodistrian University of Athens

Date: 4 July 2020

Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the Undergraduate Study Programme of **Early Childhood 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 **Early Childhood Education** Undergraduate Study Programme 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. **Professor John Spiridakis** (Chair), St. John's University, New York, USA

2. **Professor Mary Koutselini**, University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus

3. **Professor Chrystalla Mouza**, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware, USA

4. *Associate Professor Eleonora Papaleontiou-Louca*, European University, Nicosia, Cyprus

II.   Review Procedure and Documentation

The Evaluation & Accreditation Panel (hereinafter referred to as EEAP) was provided an online orientation and directions for the online site visit by HAHE using Zoom. The EEAP used Zoom to conduct online interviews and virtual site meetings by teleconference of the Early Childhood Education Undergraduate Programme of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, hereafter referred to as "Department", from June 29, 2020 to July 4, 2020. Prior to our interviews, the EEAP received the material sent by the Department to HAHE including but not limited to the External Evaluation report (2013) and their Internal Evaluation Reports. During the EEAP's visit, its members interviewed the following groups all by Zoom. In some cases, the interviewed representatives and stakeholders were on campus or at their home offices.

On Monday, June 29th, the EEAP initially teleconferenced with the Vice Rector and President of MODIP, Prof. Dimitris Karadimas, the President of MODIP Prof. Makridimas, and the Chair of the Department Prof. Dimitra Makrynioti for an overview briefing and discussion of the Undergraduate Programme (UP). Prof. Karadimas discussed the history of the UP, the academic profile, status and concerns related to compliance of the Department and University with the recommendations of MODIP based on the prior External Evaluation. The Chair of the Department introduced and elaborated upon the Department's goal and aims as well as its curriculum and also discussed specific ways the department had met its goals.

The EEAP also teleconferenced with OMEA, MODIP and Department faculty members who discussed compliance concerning modifications of the academic curriculum in light of the Department's External Evaluation in 2013 and the Department's Internal Evaluation. Further, the EEAP and Department faculty members engaged in in-depth discussion concerning the needs and concerns related to the effective implementation of the UP for the students. The EEAP also teleconferenced with MODIP staff.

On the second day of the program, Tuesday, June 30, the EEAP teleconferenced with the teaching staff members. During this session, the faculty members discussed their views about the UP including, but not limited to, their approaches to make the UP responsive to the needs of the students, their delivery of instruction methods, workload, student evaluations, the link between their teaching and research (theoretical frameworks), and collaborative self-evaluation activities.

The EEAP then met with current students from each of the four years of UP studies. The EEAP sought to determine the level of satisfaction, their opportunity for providing input and receiving feedback, as well as their concerns and recommendations. The EEAP probed the students' experiences with the UP curriculum, practical learning, faculty engagement and learning resources.

Afterwards, the EEAP was provided a video tour (link) of the various laboratories and facilities of the Department. They EEAP subsequently had the opportunity to obtain feedback regarding the operation and efficacy of the facilities and learning resources.

Following a break, the EEAP then teleconferenced with the UP graduates. The EEAP received feedback concerning the experience of the graduates, their career paths, and their views and recommendations on the effectiveness of the UP overall.

The last meeting of the day involved teleconferencing with key stakeholders including employers and social partners of the Department from both public and private sectors, to examine the collaborative activities at work. As was the case for the prior EEAP meetings during the two days, each stakeholder made a brief presentation followed by questions from members of the AP.

The final day of EEAP meetings occurred on Wednesday, July 1, 2020. The "Closure" teleconference involved the Vice Rector/President of MODIP, the Department Chair, and members of OMEA and MODIP, and MODIP staff. The EEAP members provided their initial informal reflections regarding their key findings about the efficacy of the Department's status, activities, and progress.

As with the other days of the site visit, the EEAP members met after the meeting with the personnel described to debrief and begin to discuss their observations, assessment, and conclusions regarding the UP. The EEAP would like to note that in the future, HAHE should allocate more time for discussions with the faculty. The EEAP is grateful for the excellent preparation and materials provided its members by HAHE, the Institution and Department for the virtual site visit.

III.   Study Programme Profile

The program is characterized by coherence in both the types of courses offered and the sequence in which they are offered. The development of the program follows a well-defined procedure that corresponds to the policy for quality assurance defined by the University and the Department (document entitled 'Πρόταση Ακαδημαϊκής Πιστοποίησης Προγράμματος Προπτυχιακών Σπουδών').

The academic profile and orientation of the program, the objectives, subject areas, structure and organization, expected learning outcomes, and intended professional qualifications align with the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education and the guidelines of the European Qualifications Framework (EQF). The revision complies with the basic requirements described in the Standards, on behalf of the Institution's Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) taking 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 program
- The anticipated student workload according to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System
- The provision of work experience to the students
- The linking of teaching and research
- The relevant regulatory framework and the official procedure for the approval of the program by the Institution.

The relevant information provided to the Review External Evaluation Panel and the published documentation both confirm the compliance with the above considerations and verify that the development, the content, and the allocated ECTS are appropriate for the fulfillment of the program's aims and the expected learning outcomes.

Student-centred teaching underlies the different modes of instruction and the pedagogical context of content delivery. It is regularly evaluated by student surveys and its effectiveness has been confirmed by the panel through the remote meetings with students, graduates, and mentors. The collaborative climate during teaching and learning promotes mutual respect of students' diversity and fulfilment of their individual needs. Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures.

The Department applies the published regulations covering students' admission criteria, progression, and recognition. Students receive documentation (Diploma Supplement) explaining the qualification earned, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed.

Regular monitoring, review and revision of the program is conducted aiming to maintain the level of educational provision and to create a supportive and effective learning environment for students. The revision of the program involves students and faculty and ensures that the content and the learning outcomes are up to date in light of the latest Early Childhood Education research data. The last comprehensive revision of the program was based on the 2013 External Evaluation Report.

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 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 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 focuses on the design and delivery of high-quality early childhood programs governed by an orientation and policies supporting continuous improvement. The undergraduate curriculum is aligned with international indicators of quality including a balanced integration of theory and practice, field experience, collaboration, reflection, and a focus on critical thinking and learning-how-to learn. The curriculum is well aligned with the European

Course Credits System (ECTS). The overall objective of the undergraduate program is to prepare early childhood educators who understand the complexity of educational phenomena and are ready to apply the science of learning in formal and informal early childhood settings.

Program faculty have an evaluation process in place that helps assess teaching effectiveness. Course evaluations completed by students at the end of each course assess teaching on a variety of dimensions. One evaluation questionnaire focuses on dimensions including content learning, skills for application of new learning into practice, attitudes and beliefs towards the targeted materials, and self-efficacy. A second questionnaire focuses on students' perceptions of specific teaching strategies utilized by faculty. Noteworthy is the implementation of both co-teaching and peer-observations among faculty which serves as a means for professional development, fosters interdisciplinary connections, and allows increased coherence in the program of study. Further, the EEAP noted the widespread use and departmental culture around action research – a collaborative process of inquiry that allows faculty to make data-informed decisions while tightly integrating research and practice.

There are 21 faculty in the Department of Early Childhood. The majority of them are in the rank of Associate and Full Professor. It is noteworthy that there are no lecturers indicating no hires in recent years, resulting in a higher than average faculty to student ratio. There are also 5 teaching staff primarily in the arts as well as 6 teaching staff assisting with laboratory-based activities such as statistics and new technologies. All faculty hold terminal degrees and their qualifications are appropriate to their positions.

All faculty are active scholars in their respective fields. Faculty typically publish in both conference proceedings and peer-reviewed journals, many in Greek. With the exception of a few large projects, faculty research is not typically supported by external grants. There is wide variability in both the methods and focus of research produced by faculty in the Department, which is consistent with the broad scope of social sciences. The data provided to the EEAP indicate that the average rate of publication among faculty in the department is higher compared to that of other units. It is also important to note the recent recognition of the department in the 2020 Impact Rankings.

Faculty exhibited a deep awareness of the increasingly challenging labour market and limited employment and financial compensation of their graduates. Guided by these constraints, the faculty engaged in several curricular innovations, emphasizing skills that would enhance the employment prospects of their students. The explicit focus and coursework on social science research methods, for instance, is one of those innovations. Another innovation is the collaboration with community-based, social and cultural organizations such as organizations serving refugees, allowing students to gain practical experience working with children in diverse settings. Current and former students corroborated these accounts, raving about the value of the education and training they received through the program, which in some cases opened new employment avenues beyond public schools.

The quality of support services provided to students is maintained by the Learning Management system used by approximately 80% of the faculty in the department, the Departmental website, the dedicated library which offers an electronic database and access to printed and other audiovisual materials, and a host of teaching labs. Of particular note is the peer counseling program designed to provide social-emotional support to students and ease the transition to higher education. Further, all students have a faculty advisor starting in their first year of study while the Office of Disability Support Services provides differentiated support to students with disabilities.

Finally, the department has established processes and procedures for the continuous monitoring and internal evaluation of the programs. These processes involve a focus on the alignment of the curriculum with both international and European measures of quality, the continuous improvement of the program of studies, teaching effectiveness, research productivity, and equitable distribution of resources in support of student learning. This work is conducted by a number of committees, including committees focusing on the undergraduate curriculum, internal evaluation (OMEA), communication, administration of the graduate programs, and facilities. The latter has undertaken the important challenge of the department's physical infrastructure, which is a major impediment to the work of the unit.

Overall, the EEAP applauds the Department for conducting a self-study that is honest for the purpose of optimizing the strengths of the faculty, staff, and students. The EEAP likes to acknowledge the members of the department who are advancing an ambitious education mission under less than optimal circumstances (i.e., limited resources, large numbers of students, economic crisis, deficiencies in physical infrastructure). All faculty, staff, graduates and collaborating entities provided enthusiastic accounts of the rigor promoted in the program and the value of the curriculum in preparing them for the job market. Further, the EEAP applauds the Department for trying to establish a culture conducive to self-examination, evaluation, and improvement.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

N/A

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 Early Childhood Education program was developed based on well-defined procedures established by the education reforms of the 1980's. These reforms elevated the study of early childhood education to a 4-year university degree. As a result, the mission of the program is now twofold: preparing well-qualified practitioners who are at the same time well versed in the science of learning, demonstrating a scholarly understanding of social sciences broadly.

The features of the program incorporated in the Department's compliance procedures include guidelines on student registration, a coherent program of study organized in units, measurable learning objectives, and high qualifications for faculty. The program is carried in accordance with the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education. The program of study is formally revised approximately every 7 years to respond to new developments in the field and the labour market. However, revisions are also made on an annual basis based on student course evaluations, collaboration with representatives from the student union, input from collaborating agencies, and feedback from faculty on course changes or new additions.

The program offers a smooth progression for students, starting with foundational knowledge offered through a series of 20 required courses and moving into more advanced theoretical and practical experiences. This progression is well captured in the Student Guide which articulates

the rationale and delivery methods of the program of study, including learning objectives, assessments, and the alignment with the European Course Credits System (ECTS). Noteworthy is also the progression of the field experience – students begin as observers, transition to participant observers, and subsequently engage in the design and implementation of lesson plans under the supervision of methods faculty and supervising teachers.

The field experience (practicum) provides practical skills that helps prepare students for their future roles as educators. It also provides clear linkages to the integration of teaching and research. All field work is linked to methods courses that allow students to translate research into practice and engage in analysis and reflection. While there are challenges in identifying placements for student field experiences, it was clear that the faculty try to identify high quality placements that are also diverse in nature – from public early childhood settings serving primarily refugee children to elite independent school settings. These program features are well positioned to help students develop skills that would make them competitive in the job market. The time allocated to field (practical) experience, however, is not sufficient in comparison to the European and international duration standards. Without diminishing the value of the students' observational experiences, their study of the context and reflections, the link between the practical training and the school (field) sites' timetable and activities warrants revisiting.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The Department should continue to provide clinically rich field experience placements and allocate adequate time for the practical experiences.

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 academic program of TEAPI (Department of Early Childhood Education) demonstrates a good balance between theory and practice. It also focuses on promoting basic pedagogical principles, such as the active participation of students, interdisciplinary and cooperative learning, the development of critical and metacognitive learning, and reflective processes. In general, students are encouraged to actively participate in the educational process, to the extent that the nature of the course itself allows. This is especially apparent in the implementation of workshops and practical exercises as well as the successful implementation of 'Thematic Weeks,' which are offered primarily for the promotion of students' active participation in the educational process. The range of topics covered by the 'Thematic Weeks' as well as their organization on the basis of

a small number of groups, gives students the opportunity to engage in-depth with areas of particular interest to them, to express their views and to reflect on their learning in an experiential way.

Additionally, the seminars, laboratory courses, weekly tutoring support, dissertations, and elective courses as well as the opportunities for tutoring courses according to the students' needs, difficulties, interests and abilities, contribute to their active participation. Importantly, the knowledge offered is not limited to strictly standalone subjects, but it promotes an interdisciplinary dialogue, thus preventing students' dependence on specific cognitive knowledge or a passive relationship with it.

Throughout the program of study, student-centered learning is supported by the use of multiple teaching aids, such as e-learning, PowerPoint presentations, video, movies, open classrooms, and multiple teaching methods that range from traditional lectures to individual or group work (written or oral), experiential methods, laboratory approaches, role-playing games, etc. The variety of learning approaches has been also identified and praised by the external evaluation of 2013. Students and instructors share relationships of cooperation and mutual respect and any complaints of students are resolved either individually or within the General Assembly of the Department.

TEAPI's undergraduate program emphasizes respect for diversity. A wide range of courses focuses on the concept of diversity and suggests ways to recognize and respect it, challenging arguments, prejudices and stereotypes that equate difference with inferiority. Students belonging to socially vulnerable groups are enrolled in TEAPI. Despite the obstacles due to the technical infrastructure and the lack of pedagogical means, there is the availability for interpreting lessons in sign language, and the implementation of individual assessment when needed by providing appropriate accommodations.

The evaluation process has been the subject of serious concern at TEAPI and systematic measures have been taken for its effective implementation. Evaluation has a double dimension: it concerns the level of knowledge acquisition by the students and the evaluation of the educational work conducted by the instructors themselves. The course evaluations indicate methods are made clear to students in advance and courses usually include a combination of assignments, participation, attendance and exams, (oral or) written. Additionally, there is a general online assessment questionnaire completed by students that has yielded significant results: students do not relate their assessment of their learning outcomes to the specific instructor, but rather to the content and the teaching method that is utilized regardless of the instructor.

Students have an opportunity to make appeals for specific grievances when necessary. Most of them seem to be resolved in face-to-face interactions, given the positive relations students have with faculty and staff. It is unclear, however, what the specific procedures and process involve, which may indicate the need for using a more formal appeal process for student grievances.

Finally, it is worth noting that although there are daunting challenges in terms of material and technical infrastructure aspects, as well as an exceedingly high student/faculty ratio (which tends to seriously undermine student-centered learning opportunities), there is clearly great effort made by all instructors, members of TEAPI, to implement high quality teaching and learning activities.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Consider modifying Year 3 Practicum (Πρακτική) so that students can design and implement educational plans and interventions throughout the year instead of serving as participant observers in the fall. Further, the number of registered students engaged in practicum could be improved.
- Cooperative Learning, though broadly applied across academic courses, might be further improved by educating students on its theoretical bases and preparing them in ways that facilitate its successful implementation.
- Consider having formal procedures for students' access to an appeal process.

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 is governed by clear regulations related to student admission, duration of studies, student progression, and student mobility. Typical of admission requirements in Greek higher education institutions, admission is granted on the basis of scores achieved on the National Entrance Examination (Πανελλήνιες). However, additional students gain entrance either through transfer or through qualifying exams for a second major. This has resulted in an increased number of students, severely challenging the faculty's efforts to most effectively meet program objectives, obligations and student needs.

All first-year students go through an orientation where they learn both about the curriculum and the program's administrative regulations. They are also assigned to a faculty advisor. The rules governing the interaction with the first-year advisor are shared during the first-year registration period. Faculty-student collaboration continues beyond the first year, especially through smaller type classes, upper-level seminars, and practical experience. Both faculty and students shared examples of the ways in which they provide and receive support throughout their program. The field experience also provides an opportunity for faculty and supervising teaching staff to monitor student progress while cultivating critical thinking and reflection that helps connect theory and practice. It is important to note that field experience is governed by clear ethics guidelines to safeguard the privacy of the children and teachers collaborating with the department and foster a spirit of professionalism. Noteworthy also are the opportunities provided to students for community engagement, with various agencies providing social, cultural and educational services to children.

Additional opportunities for faculty-student collaboration, progress monitoring and support are also provided through joint initiatives to conduct research. Students are invited to participate in Departmental research and to develop skills as teacher-researchers. Although not required, students can also choose to complete a thesis, which provides additional opportunities for faculty advisors to guide and assist students in their progress towards degree completion. The

Department has clear guidelines governing thesis requirements, including the written product and oral exam, as well as a rubric used for the evaluation of the thesis.

Student mobility is encouraged through Erasmus/Studies in a European University or Erasmus/Placement for work experience. Demand for the program has increased in recent years. However, the number of outgoing students far exceeds the number of incoming students.

The diploma (degree) offered by the department is awarded upon successful completion of all program requirements, including coursework and mandatory field experience. The department requires completion of 250 ECTS over a minimum of 4-years of study. The department applies the ECTS system across the curriculum, which allows easy transfer among European universities. Further the Department offers the Diploma Supplement at the request of the students, which clearly lists the ECTS units earned allowing students to continue their studies abroad.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

N/A

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 teaching staff of TEAPI includes twenty-one (21) faculty members, five (5) members of Special and Research Staff (EEP) and six (6) members of Laboratory Teaching Staff (EDIP). The program also collaborates with five (5) instructors from other departments and universities, who have been assigned to teach courses. The qualifications of the teaching staff exceed the average required qualifications for the positions they hold. The collaborative culture is the main characteristic of the Department and it has been achieved due to the common values and principles shared by teaching staff, graduates, students and the panel of the 45 mentors at schools who voluntarily offer their support and guidance during the practical training of students.

In the last decade, academic staff has shrunk, mainly because its members have retired and their positions have not been filled due to the economic crisis. Thus, the workload of the remaining faculty has been burdened, though the faculty deficit has recently improved slightly (e.g. faculty members increased from 20 to 21, in Aug. 2018). Faculty members are particularly responsible for excessive teaching tasks; they teach for at least 10 hours a week (in undergraduate and postgraduate level), with many exceeding even these long hours. In addition, faculty members support a remarkable number of dissertations for the postgraduate program and graduate theses for the undergraduate program. Although faculty members are constantly involved in research work, this work is hampered by the teaching overloads, the administrative and bureaucratic demands, and the limited financial sources to support research effort (especially after the economic crisis). Faculty research, though satisfactory (and often at the personal expense of the faculty, as the money allocated for this purpose is not enough for everyone), could be further strengthened with more stable and adequate financial support and fewer bureaucratic impediments for obtaining necessary resources to implement research activities.

The Department places an emphasis on action research. A significant number of faculty members collaborate with each other in the design of innovative research activities. Moreover, the Department, compared to other Greek Universities, is characterized by the relatively strong presence of social scientists and is open to extensive collaborations with societal agencies.

The Department participates in the Erasmus program and has entered into 7 relevant agreements with Universities from Finland, France, Italy, Cyprus, Portugal, and the United Kingdom. All faculty members have taught at other institutions several times, though the Department can rarely financially support their mobility, due to its limited budget and the public university's operation.

The Department has regularly modified the curriculum and its educational practices based on the students' evaluations. For example, it has reduced the number of students in each course by creating smaller groups within core (required) courses, it has introduced laboratory and interactive courses, such as the 'Thematic Week,' and it has promoted a variety of teaching methods. In addition, each instructor takes into account the electronic feedback from the students' questionnaires. Though the Department pays attention to this evaluation process and takes it into account for the instructors' promotion, it seems that students are often indifferent in participating into this process.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Consider developing a professional development center at the University level for faculty development and professional growth (if not offered officially by EKPA, at least in cooperation among TEAPI academic staff). The Center might provide professional development on new pedagogical trends as well as opportunities to strengthen faculty-student engagement, learn about new technologies, e-learning teaching skills, IT skills, advanced statistical skills, or writing proposal for research grants.
- Consider ways of reducing the administrative workload of faculty in favor of increasing time for research (e.g., by allocating some responsibilities to post-graduate students, and/or by transferring some of the advising duties to administrative staff).
- Consider ways of reducing the teaching workload of faculty by recruiting, if possible, Special Research Staff for supervising undergraduate students' thesis (as it happens in other Universities as well). The implementation of this arrangement might give more (or even all) students the opportunity to conduct a thesis.
- Consider ways of increasing students' participation into the Course / Instructor Evaluation Questionnaire (e.g. by having the completion of it as a prerequisite (if allowable) for their access to their academic results / grades), having students complete them on the last day of class, or providing other relevant incentives.

- For future hires, focus on faculty with expertise in specific subjects to create a better balance among faculty with general pedagogical knowledge and those with specific pedagogical content knowledge.
- The Department should be supported by the University's Governing and Quality Assurance bodies to increase the number of mentors at schools who can offer clinically-rich placements for the practical training of students.

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 teaching staff, as described in Principle 5, includes 21 DEP members, five 5 EEP and 6 EDIP Staff. It also collaborates with 5 instructors of other Departments / Universities. The Department is funded by the financial resources allocated by the central services of EKPA and by ELKE, to cover its operational and research needs, as well as the needs for innovation and development. As for the latter, the small-scale programs (in which groups of faculty members of the Department participated) are no longer available.

The scientific disciplines of the instructors fall into areas that correspond to the basic orientation of the Department, which aims for the formation of scientists and professionals in the field of Educational Sciences. Supporting the work performed in the Department is the service of instructors borrowed from primary and secondary education, who undertake the supervision of students' internships and other supplementary work.

Despite the need for further teaching staff in the Department (due to the large number of students), instructors of TEAPI manage to cover (in teaching and research) a variety of scientific subjects in social sciences, humanities, sciences, applied pedagogy and teaching and research methodology. The EEAP, however, noted that there may be the need for additional subject-specific coursework to help build students content specific pedagogical knowledge. This may be addressed by increasing staff and courses in specific subject matter (e.g. language, mathematics, physics). Basic information about the instructors (subject matter, contact details, courses taught, academic and research expertise) is available on the Department's website.

As far as the infrastructure, the Department uses two classrooms (capacity of 200 people) an amphitheatre (capacity of 120 people), a classroom (capacity of 120 people), four seminar rooms, seven teaching laboratories (especially aiming to the familiarization of students with the research process in specialized fields), a Conference/meeting room and a Library (together with the Department of Primary Education) with access for people with mobility needs.

Other EKPA students' services include electronic services such as webmail, access to a wireless network, access to learning systems (Open Courses, e-class), access to the Library of the University Club and the Libraries of other Departments of EKPA. Moreover, students have access to the Electronic Course Management System (EKPA's e-Class platform). Courses of the Department are offered in the Open Academic Courses of EKPA (available on its website) and a direct connection to 'Evdoxos' university textbook management system.

Students have also access to services provided by individual EKPA Departments (Accessibility Unit for Students with Disabilities, University Club, Student Nutrition Department, Student Reading Rooms, Student Cultural Club, University Gym, and a Counselling Center (which seems to have interesting programs, but for some reason there is little participation from the students).

The Department's website (continuously updated by the supervision of the relevant faculty committee) includes useful and relevant information needed by students, such as news and announcements, the annual Study Guide, and opportunities to claim scholarships granted by EKPA (also announced in the Foundation's website). The website can be improved by providing consistency across sections, updated stories, and information on rankings.

One possible shortcoming of the students' successful utilization of services seems to be the limited number of students taking advantage of the Erasmus+ program. The University, School and Department might consider creating ways for promoting this valuable experience to students, albeit in an economically challenging social milieu.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Consider ways of increasing students' engagement with the Erasmus program not only for domestic students but also for international students. One way to attract international students from around the world may be by offering highly desirable and creative courses in English that can attract more international students, which in turn can also have the beneficial effect of further enhancing the English proficiency of domestic students.
- Consider ways of increasing student use of the Counselling Center (e.g. by giving students the opportunity to organize workshops that interest them and inviting facilitators to offer these – with the supervision of the University Counselor).
- Consider the possibility to gradually translate most (if not all) of the Library resources into the Braille system.

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 analyzing information and planning follow-up activities.

Study Programme Compliance

The Department aims at providing students with theoretical knowledge, research and critical thinking skills, and practical training in early childhood education in accordance with the European and the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education, in order to become responsible professionals with the necessary scientific background for long-life development (evidence on the Power point presentation during the meeting and in the Internal Evaluation Report). The quality assurance policy of the Department is in line with the Institutional policy on quality, and it focuses on collecting information that lead to statistics about Quality Indicators (Document entitled 'Reference to Quality Indicators- Academic Year 2017/18') aiming at the efficient management and continuous improvement of the Program and the related activities of students and staff.

Specifically, information is collected and examined on a variety of quality indicators, including the following. Further, this information is directly shared with the information system of ΜΟΔΙΠ and HAHE:

1. General information: mean of allocated ECTS on the courses
2. Structure and organization of the program: Curriculum content, courses statistics, description of course syllabi, and allocated ECTS
3. Practical training: percentages of participation

4. Students- Induction- numbers-mobility-internalization: Students' numbers in the Department and gender balance, duration of studying, and statistics on students' mobility
5. Graduates: numbers, grades earned
6. Teaching staff: percentages of permanent and non-permanent staff and gender balance, staff recruitment per year, staff mobility, participation in collaborative projects (i.e., Erasmus, Leonardo) per year, number of doctoral theses per staff
7. Administrative staff
8. Financial information- funding: internal funding of research, research with European co-funding, Department' s funding through the Government and University's budget
9. Resources- services: Number of teaching rooms and laboratories
10. Research activities- production and recognition of research: publications in refereed journal, books, presentations in conferences, citations, prizes and distinctions

The establishment of the Interdisciplinary Committee of the Program is also a positive step towards the use of data to continuously monitor the implementation of the program and the satisfaction of the participants. The Committee supports necessary changes and reforms by collecting and analyzing information about students, staff, resources, and funding. At the end of each academic year, the Committee presents the data and proposes to the General Assembly measures for improvement.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Consider establishing methods for gathering information related to job placements and academic careers of the Department's graduates.

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 published information about teaching and academic activities is clear, objective, readily accessible and useful for prospective and current students, graduates, other stakeholders and the public. The Cloud link for the members of the EEAP facilitated their work and the easy access to the necessary information.

The document 'Reference to Quality Indicators' refers to the academic year 2016-2017 and is a valuable instrument for gathering information about the holistic Identity of the Department and detailed statistics concerning the program, students and staff, graduates, stakeholders and collaborators.

The written Guidelines for Accreditation provided by the HAHE is detailed and informative about the objectives of the evaluation, the procedure and the expected outcomes and the EEAP was able to use it to conduct its evaluation.

The document Mapping Grid provided by the University's Unit of Quality Assurance (MODIP) and associated Principles – standards of Quality Assurance, have been very useful and in accordance with the European Standards and Guidelines. It has greatly informed the EEAP's work by analyzing and illuminating the main dimensions of each principle and focusing on the key points of the discussion utilized during remote meetings.

The web page of the Department is informative and user-friendly, and the sections of the information cover all the necessary domains. More information concerning research programs and activities, distinctions and awards, available rankings should be provided.

The EEAP appreciates the highly productive and convivial collaboration of both the Department and the University key personnel in responding to information and additional document requests made by the EEAP members during the virtual site visit and facilitated by HAHE.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Publish the Practical Training Program for each year (i.e., activities, duration, assessment, ECTS).
- Add to the document 'Reference to Quality Indicators' statistics for the Practical Training Program.

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

There are in place robust activities involving continuous departmental "self-study". These activities were in place for the internal *evaluations* and have continued as was evident during the interviews with the faculty and internal evaluation committee (MODIP and OMEA) members. The TEAPI has convened its faculty to collaborate in systematically monitoring various data sources and prior recommendations. The last formal internal evaluation report was prepared in 2017 as part of the Accreditation Certification process.

Annual internal reports are prepared and shared with the TEAPI general assembly of faculty members. These members represent a broad spectrum of specializations. 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, there is an economic crisis as well as a discordance between the number of faculty and the number of students that has led the department to analyze and attempt to remedy such problems. Team-teaching and small groups are some of the methods applied. The internal evaluation mechanisms also focus on curriculum and reform as needed to reflect the changing school/societal demographics, including, but not limited to, understanding the needs of Muslim families and students. In addition, the research and practice laboratories have been reviewed with the purpose of maintaining their vitality and connection to the practical experiences of students in core subjects. Related to improvement of pedagogy for all students, faculty professional development has also been addressed in terms of seeking ways to support research and to help faculty incorporate research-based pedagogy in their coursework.

The EEAP members verified through their review of documents and interviews that the Department has in place mechanisms to regularly review essential aspects of program delivery.

This practice ensures the highest quality supportive and effective learning environment for students.

Students have the opportunity to evaluate the efficacy of their courses, including the most recent modification of the course evaluation format. Faculty then have the opportunity to review the student evaluations and utilize them to make appropriate modifications to their courses. The Department's continuous evaluation system of academic staff members by the students helps ensures the quality of the overall curriculum and provides another crucial data set to internally monitor, gauge and ensure the curriculum's fidelity to stated objectives as well as achievement of program objectives. This data is also accessible online to every academic staff member.

Stakeholders are also consulted for evaluative program purposes include external partners (regional directors of educational planning, schools, social agencies, employers, etc.). These important individuals provide, in addition to invaluable field experiences, valuable current societal feedback that informs faculty who in turn can make appropriate curriculum modifications.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The University may consider a faculty development center, which will provide centralized professional development and support to faculty. Faculty professional development efforts should also be considered within the department.
- 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 administering 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 previous Departmental *external* evaluation related to "quality assurance" occurred in 2013, preceded by the department's 2012-13 *internal* evaluation by MODIP and OMEA teams to implement the Quality Assurance evaluation mandate. The Department immediately took steps to successfully address the several key recommendations within its purview in order to make the pedagogy responsive to the social, cognitive, academic and cultural diversity of young learners. The needs of the department students were addressed in several respects, including, but not limited to, a revamping of the early childhood curriculum. The prior external evaluation report elucidated "doable" areas of recommendation in addition to areas for improvement that were beyond the purview and control of the department or university, for the most part.

There were four key recommendations that were made in the external report that have been addressed based on the Accreditation Panel's interviews with OMEA and departmental faculty members as well as a perusal of the relevant current curriculum documents. Notably, STEM area subject matter was addressed in several key ways, such as mandating a course that focused on mathematics, the gateway to other STEM subjects. The curriculum areas of psychology, sociolinguistics, developmental psychology, science instruction and environmental science were included in the teaching and course content of selected (elected) current and prospective faculty members. The department also incorporated art into the STEM areas with the involvement of the professors of theater and music education.

Another area of the department's dynamic response to the recommendation of the external evaluation is evidenced by the current ubiquity of significant electronic modes of teaching and learning throughout the department's curriculum such as the use of the e-class platform. Related to the online learning dynamic is the inclusion of "Open Academic Courses", supported by the European program, EKPA. A creative extension of online learning technology in the form of

interactive White Boards is another example of timely, relevant and effective classroom technique aimed at strengthening faculty-student engagement and support active learning.

Faculty international presence and research have also developed in the face of ever more dire economic constraints, dwindling resources and teaching workloads. Notably, the increase in student enrollment has posed monumental challenges that have been met by a highly collaborative, problem-solving faculty team. Small groups and team-teaching are some of the approaches, including offering a panoply of field experiences to the students during their coursework and formal practicum/student teaching experiences.

Processing of course evaluations has been addressed as noted in the prior section. Notably, student participation in faculty evaluations has risen and student satisfaction has continued unabated. Also, the introduction of a revised course evaluation form in 2019 promises to further enhance the role and value of student feedback.

Clearly, the external evaluation was successfully acted upon as reflected in the EEAP's review of the documents provided and discussions with the Vice-Provost, Department Chair, Department faculty, current students, alumni, and external partners. The current students and graduates evinced a satisfaction with the program, and it appeared that their respective "voices" are given a platform in the evaluation scheme. Also, a symbiotic relationship was evident between the Department and the external partners who were also consulted by the department for "External" assessment purposes, albeit in a less formal manner. The dynamism of these external partners and their views on pedagogy, course content and provision of field experiences has undoubtedly contributed to the graduates' satisfaction with the overall program. Graduates reported that the UP instilled in them a feeling of efficacy in confronting new situations in the classroom and in their other professional lives.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

N/A

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I.   Features of Good Practice

- The collaboration and honest communication channels among the Department, MODIP, OMEA, faculty, staff members and students has generated a high-quality assurance approach with the potential to generate positive outcomes for faculty and students.
- The Department provided adequate and prompt responses to the recommendations provided in the external evaluation conducted in 2013.
- The Department offers a coherent curriculum that is continuously reviewed and updated.
- The faculty implement varied methods of instruction and actively seek to promote and model high quality teaching and active learning as well as a creative autonomy among students.
- The Department offers multiple opportunities to students to explore their own interests through unique experiences such as the Thematic Weeks as well as a diverse number of elective courses.
- The faculty bring strong expertise and dedication to serving the needs of the students, often going above and beyond required expectations.
- Faculty in the Department have created shared values and established a climate of collaboration, conviviality and mutual support.
- There is a high degree of satisfaction, support and enthusiasm for the Department on the part of the students, graduates, and external stakeholders that is a testament to the DPE's effectiveness and success in all the major categories addressed by the AP.

II.   Areas of Weakness

- Field experiences focus primarily on observation and should provide more opportunities for structured independent and mentored teaching experiences.
- The limited number of participating mentors and field experience placements should be remedied to strengthen the effectiveness of the students' practicum experience.
- There is a high faculty – student ratio, which becomes exacerbated by students who fail to complete their studies during the allowable time period.

III.   Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- Revisit the student field experience so greater focus is placed on the design and implementation of a "clinical experience" replete with structured, mentored *instructional* time and the opportunity to develop classroom management skills. Along these lines, consider increasing the time allocated to practical training in the third and fourth year of studies and establish clear guidelines and expectations on the role of the students, teachers, mentors and faculty during the practicum experience.

- Provide opportunities and training in quantitative and qualitative research methods beyond action research, to help enhance graduates' qualifications for the labour market and their participation in the scientific academic community.
- Faculty and doctoral student should try to increase their participation in European funding research projects and enhance research collaborations with other universities as scientific leaders. In turn, this will help enhance the quality and quantity of the research output among faculty members. Participation in European research projects is a fruitful way to establishing additional links between teaching and research and further increase the number of publications and international citations.
- Provide more consistent opportunities for faculty professional development (e.g. create a center or seminar series for faculty, book studies, departmental presentations etc.).
- To address workload issues, identify ways of leveraging graduate student support (e.g. Teaching Apprenticeships for doctoral students).
- Establish an alumni association that allows the department to both follow students after graduation while cultivating a network of support, which may help increase the number of high-quality field placements.

IV.   Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: 1- 10

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: N/A

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are: N/A

The Principles where failure of compliance was identified are: N/A

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

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname   **Signature**

1. **Professor John Spiridakis** (Chair), St. John's University, New York, USA

2. **Professor Mary Koutselini**, University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus

3. **Professor Chrystalla Mouza**, University of Delaware, Newark, Delaware, USA

4. *Professor Eleonora Papaleontiou-Louca*, European University, Nicosia, Cyprus