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ΑΡΧΗ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ
ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΣΤΗΝ ΑΝΩΤΑΤΗ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗ

HELLENIC REPUBLIC
HQA
HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE
AND ACCREDITATION AGENCY

Accreditation Report for the Undergraduate Study Programme of:

Informatics & Telematics
Institution: HAROKOPIO UNIVERSITY
Date: 20/03/2019

ΑΡΙΣΤΕΙΔΟΥ 1 & ΕΥΡΗΠΙΔΟΥ, 105 59 ΑΘΗΝΑ
Τηλ.: +30 210 9220944, FAX: +30 210 9220143
Ηλ. Ταχ.: adipsecretariat@hqa.gr. Ιστότοπος: <http://www.hqa.gr>

1, ARISTIDOU ST., 105 59 ATHENS, GREECE
Tel.: +30 210 9220944, Fax: +30 210 9220143
Email: adipsecretariat@hqa.gr. Website: www.hqa.gr



Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση
Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινωνικό Ταμείο

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



Report of the Panel appointed by the HQA to undertake the review of the
Undergraduate Study Programme of Informatics and Telematics of the
Harokopio University for the purposes of granting accreditation

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PART A: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW

I. The Accreditation Panel

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the Undergraduate Study Programme of **Informatics & Telematics of Harokopio University** comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HQA Register, in accordance with the Law 4009/2011:

1. Prof Sotirios Skevoulis (Chair)
Pace University, USA

2. Prof Constandinos Mavromoustakis,
University of Nicosia, Cyprus

3. Prof Panagiotis Petratos
California State University Stanislaus, USA

4. Dr Paraskevas Dalianis
UniSystems S.A., QUEST Group, Greece

5. Prof Costas Iliopoulos
King's College London, UK

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

The Accreditation Panel members (AP) attended a meeting at the HQA headquarters in Athens (Aristidou 1) on Monday 11/2/2019, during which staff of the HQA (the President, Vice President and General Manager) explained the Accreditation Procedure, and the role and tasks of the AP members. The documentation and the supporting material provided to the panel included:

- the evaluation guide created by HQA,
- the mapping grid, created by HQA, which was very helpful in mapping the contents of the different principles to questions to be answered during the site visit, the accreditation proposal (“Πρόταση Ακαδημαϊκής Πιστοποίησης του ΠΠΣ”) prepared by the department,
- a set of annexes with the accreditation proposal, explicating various issues and providing detailed information; including the study guide, course descriptions, policies’ documents, etc,
- a set of documents presenting quality indicators both for the department and the study program, the report of the 2014 external evaluation conducted by HQA for the Department
- a set of presentations used by the HQA staff members to present the purpose, goals and procedures of the accreditation.

The AP members met privately afterwards for about an hour to discuss their initial impressions of the Department.

The site visit to the Department of Informatics & Telematics of the Harokopio University started on Monday 11/2/2019. The visit lasted from 14.30 to 20:00. At the welcome meeting, the AP met the Deputy-Rector of Academic Affairs & International Relationships and President of MODIP, Prof. Katia Lasaridi, and the Head of Department, Prof. Dimosthenis Anagnostopoulos. Prof. Lasaridi gave a broad overview of the history and current situation of the University, informed the AP about the Quality Assurance Procedures of the University. She indicated that the Department participated fully in the university’s evaluation processes.

Prof. Anagnostopoulos made a short presentation of the history of the Department, which was founded in 2006 and accepted its first cohort of undergraduate students in the academic year 2007-2008. He explained various aspects concerning the study program and its objectives, staffing, numbers of students, program progression and completion statistics, and the preparation of the students for the job market.

The AP subsequently had meetings with:

1. MODIP representatives (Prof. Lasaridi, Prof. Matala, and MODIP officers Mrs. Papadiotou and Mrs. Dede) and members of OMEA (Prof. Vamvakari, Prof. Kamalakis, Prof. Varlamis). The above named Quality Assurance representatives explained the Department's evaluation processes, which are coordinated by the OMEA (Internal Evaluation Committee of Department), and answered a series of questions from the AP, providing supplementary information.

2. Employers and social partners (Mr. Thiveos, Director R&D, Intrasoft International, Mr. Kalogridis, Director, Public Sector & Software Products BU, Unisystems, Mrs. Papanidou A' Vice President, Federation of Hellenic Information Technology and Communications Enterprises, Mr. Monokrousos, Country Leader & Cluster Leader GCMM, Oracle Hellas and Mrs. Mitropoulou, General Director, Open Technologies Alliance, GFOSS). They all spoke very highly about the department and its graduates expressing their admiration of the high quality graduates. They stated that they accept many students as interns while they are working on their practicum and an impressive percentage of them (about 75%) receive offers from their companies to stay as full time employees.

3. Alumni. The AP met with approximately 15 alumni to discuss their experience of studying at the Department and subsequent activities. They all had found jobs and/or continuing their education for Master's degree. The AP asked them about their satisfaction with the Department and the study program, their involvement in evaluation processes, and the possibilities they had of participating in research activities. The students expressed their enthusiasm with their learning experience and had an excellent opinion about their relationship and interactions with the members of the teaching and administrative staff.

After the above meetings, the AP met privately to a debriefing meeting discuss the findings of the visit so far. The day ended with transport of the AP members back to their hotel.

The following day the AP had the second visit at the Department and the day started with a meeting with members of the teaching staff (Profs G. Dimitrakopoulos, D. Michail, M. Nikolaidi, P. Rizomiliotis, C. Sofianopoulou, C. Tserpes). The AP discussed with them their professional careers, workloads, staff mobility, their understanding of student-centred teaching, the linking of teaching and research, structure of the study programme, and other such matters.

In the afternoon (12:00-13:00) the AP was given a tour of the department's own building, visiting classrooms, computer laboratories and other departmental facilities, accompanied by the Head of Department, the Chair of OMEA, and members of administrative and academic staff.

Following that the AP had a tour of the main campus and visited the office of student affairs, the library.

The AP would like to thank the Deputy Rector, the Head of Department and their colleagues for this helpful tour, and in general for the very positive and professional atmosphere in which the site visit was conducted. All members of Department were very willing to collaborate with the AP and provide further information when requested. The extensive documentation provided in advance, and in hard copy and on a flash disk during the visit, forms the basis of the current report.

III. Study Programme Profile

The Department of Informatics and Telematics was founded in 2006 and accepted its first cohort of students in 2007-2008 academic year. It provides to each students the necessary and in-depth knowledge of information technology and telecommunications so that its graduates may successfully design, implement, evaluate and maintain innovative software products and services. The Department has established and runs a well thought plan to interface with the industry.

The number of students in each incoming class every September varies significantly (i.e. one given year may be 104 students and the following 195). Despite this great fluctuation that challenges the scheduling and availability of resources, the department manages to maintain high quality standards for every student. This is best shown from the impressive percentage of students that graduated within 6 years ($n+2$) which is consistently above 71%.

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.

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 of Informatics and Telematics (DIT) offers an undergraduate program of studies which comprises of 29 compulsory courses, and 24 optional courses. The program is state of the art, it has substantial width/depth, and meets the international standards of a computer science undergraduate program. The academic staff teaches courses which are close to their specialization and/or have substantial knowledge of the course topics. They also use a number of bought in staff to cover optional courses due to lack of manpower and/or in topics that the

academic staff may not have sufficient expertise. The examination process is excellent. The exams are set in a professional manner and the process is well thought and thorough. The quality of exam questions is also very good. The Quality Assurance (QA) policy has been developed by the MODIP in cooperation with the OMEA of the Department; its quality assurance policy follows the strategic goals and quality policy of the Harokopio University. DIT conducts student evaluations using specific questionnaires that are summarised by the OMEA and the MODIP. The courses of the undergraduate program are evaluated annually and are adapted as needed based on the feedback from students, academic as well industry/external advisors. DIT's documentation states the learning outcomes and qualifications of its program following the guidelines of the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education. DIT graduates are able to combine both theoretical and practical knowledge in informatics and telematics. Linking of teaching and research is pursued by DIT. An able number of examples were presented to us, demonstrating the use of research topics used in teaching and project work by students. From next year there will be student advisors appointed for each student and offer support and advice when needed. The administrative staff offer services to the students, in a well organized manner. They are easily approachable, they are available in person as well as via phone and email. Information can easily be obtained online too. Students and staff seem to be actively participating in the local community and industry through social and training activities. Considering the existing financial constraints that most Greek Universities face, DIT maintains and supports a program of studies with the collaboration of the OMEA with the MODIP of the University.

Panel judgement

Please tick one of the following:

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

Panel Recommendations

1. The Department is encouraged to establish systematic processes for eliciting input from external stakeholders, like industrial partners and alumni, for reviewing and /or consulting purposes towards the continuous enhancement of its study programme and QA policy and processes.

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 programme of study was developed in accordance to the relevant policies of the institution. The Internal Quality Assurance System aims to achieve a high-level of quality in the operation of Harokopio University of Athens and the department of Informatics and Telematics, and aims to incrementally show the continuous improvement of its educational and research work, as well as the high quality and efficiency of its services, in accordance with the international practices of the European Higher Education Area as well as the principles and guidelines of ADIP. As part of these policies, the institution's Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP) oversees the process of internal and external evaluation of the University's academic Departments and their programmes. The AP is satisfied with the level of periodic review compliance in relation to the Department's adherence to Quality Assurance policies and standards, as stipulated by Hellenic Quality Assurance (HQA) code of practice. Evaluating the level of compliance at the local level is the responsibility of the Department's Study Programme Committee (SPC) whose remit includes:

- reporting on the planning, design and delivery of the curriculum;
- monitoring the overall coherence of the academic provision;
- monitoring student outcomes;

- coordinating the work of internal committees and external partners to facilitate the overall delivery of the programme;
- evaluate the progress or the potential updates that the courses and/or program requires/needs.

The AP is satisfied with the way the SPC processes are effective with its annual report which demonstrates the overall compliance of the Department with the strategic aims of the institution, the pursuit of high-quality research and teaching, comprehensive external engagement and international relations, and general efforts to support the students. The Department and the School support the students towards their smooth transition to the labor market (before and after graduation) by providing them with information and advice on labor market status and services as well as the continuation of their studies in Greece and abroad. Job and career counseling services are offered through individual or group sessions, seminars and workshops on subjects such as CV composition, selection process and interview as well as job search techniques.

One important parameter of the overall strategy of the Department is the professional practice and the engagement with the wider professional community, which features strongly the close relations with the local industry and the (long lasting) synergies that arise. The department offers a clear direction, paying attention to the importance of external engagement. To this end there are certain mechanisms which can be utilised to facilitate such engagement. In addition academic staff in this area builds a very good ground to expand further towards this direction. The legislative framework of the University allows to the SPC to monitor the active participation of students in various bodies allowing them to convey their own opinion by expressing their own views regarding their programme of study, the potential improvements in its structure, and any potential challenges.

The practice of using questionnaires with well defined questions consists the primary information gathering mechanism.

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 consider the further improvement of the interaction opportunities between the students (and staff) with external bodies. The Department should increase students' awareness and consider the provision of incentives for practical training increasing students' interest to the available posts for practical training. The already established excellent relations with external bodies will provide a more extrovert profile for the department and the University overall.

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

A student-centered learning approach has been adopted and applied to a large extent by the Department. It is noteworthy that the annual assessment is well considered and taken into account in the continuous evolution of the study programme and the structure and content of its courses.

Students are encouraged to develop their skills through individual and group assignments and projects. There is sufficient evidence that students are given some opportunities to participate in research-oriented projects. However, this should be organized and arranged systematically.

All students are required to work on a thesis during the last year of their studies. The degree offered has one direction without offering any alternative pathways to the students allowing for discrete flexibility based on their individual preferences. This has been a characteristic that the students seem to appreciate a lot in the degree. Based on the feedback provided, students feel that they are provided a sufficient set of skills towards the market needs. Selective courses available on the study guide appear to align with the students' demands and are regularly offered to the students. Emphasis is being given to applications although some basic theory courses are provided as well.

According to the programme's accreditation report, the study guide, and as verified by the students, the assessment criteria for each class are being made clear in the beginning of the semester. Students are often given the opportunity to participate in optional projects offered as part of the class.

The Department encourages an open-door environment approach making students comfortable to meet with their instructors for any request. The Department has just established the role of Academic Advisor, but this has not been implemented yet. Detailed process and sufficient rules have not yet being specified and documented towards the whole process. Though the panel is very enthusiastic with the creation of this new role, the Department should carefully consider how these additional responsibilities will impact the faculties' other responsibilities. In terms of assessment and continuous improvement, the Department maintains an effective way to collect feedback from the students. The response rates in the student evaluation questionnaires may, however, be further enhanced.

AP appreciates the fact that the Department is committed to stimulating a student-centered learning environment and promoting mutual respect, promoting the continuous evaluation and enhancement of its structure and processes towards this direction.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

1. While there seems to be a practice of inviting some of the highest-performing students to participate in more advanced projects in some research projects, this should be an opportunity made available to the entire student body to ensure the equal treatment of students through a more formalized process.
2. An extended and well organized orientation day enhancing a broader dissemination of policies related to the study programme, the courses offered, the research undertaken,

facilities and services provided may be scheduled and implemented for the first year students early upon their first semester. This will be definitely enhanced and further supported by the implementation of the Academic advisor role.

3. The Department should keep on its commitment towards the development of effective ways to collect measurable and actionable feedback from students and further increase the response rate to the assessment of the training 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

Institution is fully compliant, has created procedures for award and recognition of higher education degrees, studies duration, rules for students' progression, recognition of credits among various European academic Institutions according to Lisbon Recognition Convention. Students receive documentation explaining learning outcomes, context, level, content of studies completed culminating in qualification gained. Upon graduation, a Diploma Supplement is automatically provided to all students, following a University-wide policy, including information on ECTS credits and the courses successfully passed.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The number of students accepted and transferred -in order to ensure high quality of studies- must remain small and manageable according to the founding principles of Informatics and Telematics Department and of Harokopio University of Athens.

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 Department is blessed to have a group of high quality, committed faculty members and special teaching staff (ΕΔΙΠ). They maintain the highest standards in their teaching and research duties. The department follows the well established procedures by the Greek law for the selection and promotion of its faculty. These rather complex rules are common to all Greek Universities. The department has set up and follows transparent processes for the recruitment of qualified staff. Special emphasis is given in highlighting the importance of teaching and research.

The department makes full use of the limited means available for assuring professional faculty development. Despite this, every faculty member and PhD student is encouraged and fully supported to submit a paper and/or travel at least to one international conference with all expenses paid by the department. The professional development budget has of course to be aligned with the overall financial situation of the Harokopion University and the Greek economy. Currently, Erasmus and sabbatical leaves are the only means for teaching staff mobility. The department offers one semester of sabbatical leave every three years. Given the small number of faculty members and the pressing needs for teaching classes the right for sabbatical leave may not gets-exercised consistently. According to the department's resources five new faculty members will join in September 2019. That will greatly enhance the ability for more consistent and frequent mobility.

We observed a very significant effort of the teaching faculty to bring quality research into the undergraduate classrooms. Students are getting involved and participate in research projects as well as they are exposed to a number of software tools developed by the faculty.

While we were not able to verify the presence of an official policy/process with respect to attendance requirements, it is important to note that students unanimously praised faculty for their consistent presence and availability either online or in their offices every day of the week.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The AP recommends that the Department prioritizes the hiring of new faculty members (finalizing their hiring procedures) in order to ensure that the overall KPIs are adopted.

The department is encourage to establish frequent (once a year) self assessment procedures for its faculty. This could be facilitated by the creation of a common questionnaire (Faculty Activity Report) for all faculty where they will be asked to report their teaching/research/service achievements/participation in the current academic year. This will help the faculty to prepare their tenure and/or promotion dossiers and also provide them and any external/internal evaluation committee to glance over their achievements on a particular year or set of years.

The AP would also recommend to the department to make every effort to increase the percentage of student participation in the course evaluation process every semester. While the current percentage (about 30%) is satisfactory, an increase would give the department a more informative tool to monitor the quality of the courses.

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 Department of informatics and telematics has 5 lecture theatres, plus one small amphitheatre and a large one. These appear to be sufficient for their lecturing needs. Additionally there are two hardware labs that are a bit small, but by splitting the classes, the academic staff manages to fulfil the teaching module needs. There are 2 computer labs, the equipment is modern and in good condition; the labs are in pristine condition. There are three variants of computer operating systems, Linux, Windows as well as Apple iOS. Overall the teaching facilities are modern and in an excellent condition.

The department is housed in a building that is a bit far from the main building of the University. The building is kept in top condition. A refectory with modern facilities cater for the students and the staff. The academic staff offices are modern and well kept.

The administrative staff for the department is also housed in the same building. It is sufficiently staffed, well equipped and organized. They offer support to students and staff in a fast, efficient manner. They are friendly and available sufficient amount of time.

The University does not provide any dormitories or sport facilities.

In the main building of the University, there is a library as well as additional facilities. There is an out-building that houses student support services and the ERASMUS+ office. The staff seems to be knowledgeable and has established robust procedures to support the students.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The Department should encourage and support its graduates towards setting up and maintaining an alumni body, which is expected to significantly contribute to the Department's activities in various ways (as external stakeholders participating in reviewing / supporting committees, etc.).

The Department should enhance the range of support services available to the students, by encouraging, for example, cooperation agreements with the municipal / prefecture authorities or local sport unions, providing access to sport facilities close to the Department's premises.

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 Harokopio University of Athens is responsible for overseeing the continuous improvement of its academic provision and research outputs, as well as the efficient operation of its academic services, in accordance with international practices and the guidelines provided by ADIP. An internal evaluation of standards is carried out annually, consisting of targeted student, academic, and administrative staff questionnaires. The Internal Evaluation Committee works in collaboration with MODIP to analyse and communicate the information obtained from the surveys. The Quality Assurance goals of Harokopio University of Athens are based on its strategic plan and aim to provide specific and measurable Key Performance Indicators for all its main activities. Efficiency measurements include quantitative and qualitative indicators which provide valuable and reliable information, and the collection of datasets encompassing the number and categories of indicators per quality objective, and their analysis and reporting for the purpose of supporting higher level decision-making. The number of students is usually a barrier to perform high quality teaching and learning. In this case the number of students in some courses seems to be relatively high, and it increases even more in times of examination period. Students seem to be very satisfied with the offered courses throughout the semester as well as the courses'-semester's breakdown. Considering the latter students are satisfied with the learning outcomes of the courses, and with the acquired knowledge by the program in total.

The Harokopio University of Athens provides an efficient IT infrastructure which ensures the collection of all relevant and data, and the publishing of annual reports which are posted on the website for public access. The overall process that the university employs, ensures that the anonymity and confidentiality is secured for the required data of all the above. Finally, it is worthy to mention that the questionnaires are undergoing continuous improvements (minimizing the volume of questions etc.) so that the end-

recipients (i.e. students) are urged to complete them accordingly. It is clear to the AP that the staff of the Department feel well served by the electronic resources available to them, including the computer labs which in some cases play an important role in the conduct of research. The students are clearly happy with their learning experience in this respect and value the resources available to them.

It is important to mention that students can easily reach the industry sector of their discipline. This is also clearly indicated by the social partners who mentioned that graduates are capable finding jobs in their domain which in many other cases is extremely difficult and highly competitive.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Principle 8: Public Information

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

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

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

Study Programme compliance

The Department's policy towards the timely dissemination of information related to teaching, academic activities, and quality assurance is mainly provided through its website. To this end, its website contains information about its facilities, staff, undergraduate and graduate degree programs and guides, basic information on research activities, announcements, events, policy of quality assurance, and internal assessment reports. This information is provided in the form of web-pages and / or downloadable PDF documents.

Information, especially, related to the degree programme is well-organized and comprehensive. In particular, the Department's Guide for Studies provides a wealth of information about the University, the Department, the structure of its degree program (as well as the graduate programme), graduation requirements, a detailed description of the available courses, and the course offering schedule of the current academic year.

No information on the role of the Academic advisor is provided yet. The Department's website provides limited information related to extracurricular activities. Apart from links to the University's relevant web-pages, where relevant to the Department's interest information is very limited, discipline-specific career services/guidance/advice and employment opportunities is not provided.

In addition, the Department does not appear to have any regular communication strategy to connect with all of its stakeholders (e.g., periodic newsletter).

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

1. A formal process upon the provision of updated information should be defined and followed assuring the provision of all important information (apart from announcements, which are already being taken care) on the Department's activities and material.
2. The Department needs to establish and implement a communication strategy in order to effectively and timely disseminate relevant information about its various academic, research, and social/community-related activities to all of its stakeholders.
3. The Department needs to develop a strategy to use its website and other social media towards establishing and maintaining a sense of community among the faculty, students, and all external 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

Institution is fully compliant, has created review procedures for the evaluation and improvement of the content of studies with integration of latest research in the discipline, changing society needs, effectiveness of students' assessment, students' expectations, needs, workload progression, learning environment, support services. Programs of studies are reviewed and revised regularly involving students and stakeholders and revised program specifications are published.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Institution is encouraged to carry on internal quality assurance procedures for audit, annual internal review of programs of studies to achieve objectives through monitoring and revisions for continuous improvement.

Principle 10: Regular External Evaluation of Undergraduate Programmes

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

HQA is responsible for administrating the programme accreditation process which is realised as an external evaluation procedure, and implemented by a committee of independent experts. HQA 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

There are numerous aspects of the Department of Informatics & Telematics and its work that validate a very good practice. Department's commitment to the spirit and the processes of Quality Assurance is evident in all principles and aspects. Both faculty and staff are passionate about their work, display a great team spirit and they are dynamic and innovative. Both groups work very hard to support the students both academically and personally. All these qualities were clearly evident during AP's site visit. Students and recent graduates were really happy with their student experience and were praising the efforts of the department's and University's employees. The department is of the highest possible quality and a valuable asset of the Harokopion University.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

- The department has put in place a state of the art curriculum. Students receive a well-rounded education.
- The department has established an international advisory committee to help maintain the high educational and professional standards of the School.
- The department has fostered and established strong relationships and communication with students. It keeps track of their professional development and invites them back to the School to meet with students
- A very strong set of relationships with local community and industrial advisors has been established. This fact promotes department's visibility and fosters cooperation with the community.
- The AP was really impressed by how well buildings, the lecture rooms and the offices are kept. Kudos go to all people of the department and the University (faculty, staff, students)

II. Areas of Weakness

- There is the tendency from the Ministry of Education to Increase the number of incoming students almost every year. AP would like to warn that if this trend continues and given the limited existing infrastructure (good enough for the current number of students though) soon enough there will be urgently needed more buildings/classrooms. Perhaps a second auditorium or teaching room with capacity more than 100 students or so.
- While the number of students participating in the evaluation is at a good level compared to other School/department across the country, AP would like to point out that it is still low. The department must find ways to encourage student participation in course evaluations.
- AP recognizes the lack of student dormitories as well as the lack of sports facilities.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- AP realizes that it is not within the purview of the department but a constant effort must be made and request must be send for an increase in the number of permanent faculty.
- Development and dissemination of relevant information of what students and faculty need to do when dealing with a case of harassment of any kind. A detailed guide, or a seminar delivered perhaps once a year, would protect the rights of both students and faculty.
- The department must continue asking for relatively low number of incoming students every year in order to ensure that its students receive the maximum benefits from the

existing infrastructures. Alternatively, there must be a demand for expansion in the number of classrooms and labs.

- Inform students of the importance of their course evaluations and provide incentives for their increased participation in this process. Those incentives could be i.e. “ the first 10 to complete all the questions of the course evaluation will have lunch with the Chair/Dean/Rector” etc.
- The department should actively pursue government funding and possibly fund raising from the private sector (via donations) for the development of student dormitories and sport facilities.
- The Department has established an external advisory board. It should regularly solicit the advice of the board members on matters relevant to the degree programme, invite them over for a visit from time to time and integrate their feedback in its continued assessment process.
- AP suggests the creation and dissemination of formal procedure for student appeals.
- The AP would like to point out the lack of official process for provision of courses’ assessment feedback back to students. The department must announce the improvements made to the curriculum, courses and/or procedures based on students’ feedback. That will enhance the visibility of student course evaluation procedure and students will appreciate even more the process.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are:

Principle 1: Academic Unit Policy for Quality Assurance

Principle 2: Design and Approval of Programs

Principle 4: Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification

Principle 5: Teaching Staff

Principle 6: Learning Resources and Student Support

Principle 7: Information Management

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

Principle 10: Regular External Evaluation of Undergraduate Programmes

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are:

Principle 3: Student - centered Learning, Teaching and Assessment

Principle 8: Public Information

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are:

None

The Principles where failure of compliance was identified are:

None

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

**The members of the Accreditation Panel
for the UGP “Informatics and Telematics” of the Harokopio University**

Name and Surname

Signature

Prof Sotirios Skevoulis

Pace University, USA

Prof Constandinos Mavromoustakis

University of Nicosia, Cyprus

Prof Panagiotis Petratos

California State University Stanislaus, USA

Dr Paraskevas Dalianis

UniSystems S.A., QUEST Group, Greece

Prof Costas Iliopoulos

King’s College London, UK