



**ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ**  
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



**Εθνική Αρχή  
Ανώτατης Εκπαίδευσης**  
Hellenic Authority  
for Higher Education

Αριστείδου 1 & Ευριπίδου 2 • 10559 Αθήνα | 1 Aristidou str. & 2 Evripidou str. • 10559 Athens, Greece  
T. +30 210 9220 944 • F. +30 210 9220 143 • E. secretariat@ethaae.gr • [www.ethaae.gr](http://www.ethaae.gr)

**Accreditation Report**  
**for the New Undergraduate Study Programme in**  
**operation (Integrated Master) of:**

**Agriculture**

**Institution: Hellenic Mediterranean University**

**Date: 12 November 2022**



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



Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the New Undergraduate Study Programme in operation (Integrated Master) of **Agriculture** of the **Hellenic Mediterranean University** for the purposes of granting accreditation

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## **PART A: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW**

### **I. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel**

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the new undergraduate study programme in operation (Integrated Master) of **Agriculture** of the **Hellenic Mediterranean University** comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

#### **1. Prof. Andy Mauromoustakos (Chair)**

University of Arkansas, US

#### **2. Prof. Ioannis Tzanetakis**

University of Arkansas, US

#### **3. Prof. Stella Kantartzi**

Southern Illinois University, US

#### **4. Mr. Anestis Delepoglou**

Geotechnical Chamber of Greece, Thessaloniki, Greece

#### **5. Ms. Aphrodite Lioliou**

Student of Agriculture, International Hellenic University, Thessaloniki, Greece

## II. Review Procedure and Documentation

The Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (HAHE) initiated the accreditation review process for the undergraduate study program of the Department of Agriculture (DAG) of the Hellenic Mediterranean University (HMU) in a hybrid, face-to-face and teleconferencing mode. Scheduled briefings and meetings were conducted efficiently without technical difficulties.

Before the visit, EEAP received the Proposal for Accreditation of DAG and other relevant material. Four members of EEAP met on November 3<sup>rd</sup> online to discuss the strategy and issues to be considered during the visit as well as putative task allocations for each panel member. Two members of the panel attended online whereas the rest travelled to Heraklion on November 5<sup>th</sup>/6<sup>th</sup>.

The accreditation review started on November 6<sup>th</sup> at 7.00pm according to the schedule prepared by the HAHE. The EEAP met with the HMU Vice Rector Prof. Drakakis and the Department Head, Assoc. Prof. Roditakis. The Vice Rector also serves as the President of the Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP). The EEAP was briefed on the history and academic profile of HMU; the Department Head presented the departmental profile, its policy on quality assurance and other issues related to the study program. Later, Professor Drakakis together with representatives of the Quality Assurance Policy DAG members (OMEA), Prof. Tampakaki, Prof. Nektarios, Prof. Loulakis, Assis. Prof. Alissandrakis, Assis. Prof. Kontaxakis, Assis. Prof. Daliakopoulos and Ms Divini, MODIP staff joined the meeting. Discussions focused on the compliance of the undergraduate program (UP) to the standards for quality accreditation and other issues including student questionnaires and assignments.

The following day the three EEAP members that travelled to Heraklion arrived at the DAG premises at 2.15 pm. For the next three hours the group visited the vast majority of the facilities including the dormitories, research and teaching laboratories as well as some lecture halls. During this time, the group joined two classes and discussed with students the quality of instruction and facilities so as to receive broader feedback on the program and student life. At 5.15 pm the full EEAP panel met with teaching staff; Prof. Goumas, Prof. Ververidis, Assis. Prof. Dragasaki, Prof. Goumenaki, Prof. Thrassyvoulos, Prof. Kokkinou, Dr. Markakis, and Dr. Maragkaki, the latter two being External Academic Personnel. The group discussed the UP links between teaching and research, professional development opportunities, mobility, faculty workload, student evaluations and promotion opportunities for External Academic Personnel. Following, the EEAP met with several undergraduate students to discuss student satisfaction with teaching and research, facilities, and career paths. Some stakeholders attended the meeting in person and others via videoconference, namely Mrs Choudestanaki, Vice Governor of Primary Sector, Prefecture of Crete; Mrs Chalkiadaki, CEO, Chalkiadakis Supermarket chain; Mr Bounakis, Director, Proactive SA, Business Consulting; Mrs

Fragkouli, Head of Directorate of Environment, Rural Development and Trade, Municipality of Heraklion; Mr Stefanakis, President of the Board, Geotechnical Chamber of Greece, Division of Crete; Prof Mamalis, President of the Board, Geotechnical Chamber of Greece; Mr Kykrilis, Director, Plastika Kritis SA; Mr Georgusis, Director, Biotopio S.A.; Mr Tzompanakis, Director, AgroPhilia SA and Mr Delibaltadakis, Marketing Manager MED BA, Syngenta Hellas SACI. The meeting focused on the DAG extroversion and the connectivity between the department, industry, and society. At the end of the day, the EEAP had a short debriefing to reflect on the impressions of the visit and the putative rating of the principles.

Later on, EEAP met with the Vice Rector, Department Head and OMEA to discuss the panel's impressions of the visit. EEAP acknowledges the warm welcome by the DAG staff and their spirit of cooperation. All parties involved conducted themselves professionally and the process was smooth, effective, and efficient. From November 9<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup>, the EEAP worked on the Accreditation Report.

**IMPORTANT NOTE:** The five-year undergraduate program has only completed its first three years with two completed during the COVID pandemic. Therefore, the EEAP conducted the evaluation and drew conclusions based on the experiences of the three-fifths of the program already completed, the documents provided regarding its strategic planning and studies program, and the discussions during the meetings.

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

HMU was established by law in 2019 (Law 4610/2019) as an Independent Higher Education Institution. It was the re-embodiment of the Technical Educational Institution (TEI) of Crete that was first established in 1983.

During the transition the 13 TEI departments were merged to 11, one of which in DAG. DAG provides education at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels covering three major directions: 'Utilization of Natural Resources', 'Vegetable Science' and 'Plant Protection and Biotechnology Application'. The department belongs to category "08 Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Veterinary", Subcategory "081 Agriculture" and "0811 Crop and livestock production" based on the UNESCO categorization of scientific fields (ISCED 2013). The DAG mission is to provide high quality, University level education in the field of agronomy and agronomical technology as well as promoting science and technology through basic and translational research.

The number of incoming students is determined yearly by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs. The total number of registered undergraduate students is 766 (1288 if including those that registered before 2019 and the transition from TEI of Crete to HMU). There are 76 graduate students and 11 PhD candidates studying in the department.

The program offers an Integrated MSc degree (National and European Qualifications Framework level 7) within 10 semesters (5 years), requiring a total of 320 ECTS. The curriculum is organized into two groups of courses (General (36 ECTS)/specialized background (174 ECTS) and agricultural specialization (60 ECTS). Integral parts of the Curriculum are the Diploma Thesis (30 ECTS) and a 4-month Internship (20 ECTS). Based on the data received, 89% of the total courses offered are mandatory towards the degree and 11% are electives.

Today, the Department is composed of fifty (21) Faculty members, (4) Special Technical Laboratory personnel, two (2) Administrative Staff, and contract teaching personnel under the P.D. 407/80.

The Department includes four (4) institutionalized laboratories:

- Utilization of Natural Resources and Agricultural Engineering
- Biological and Biotechnological Applications
- Olive Farming and Agroecological Production Systems
- Quality and Safety of Agricultural Products, Landscape and Environment

## **PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES**

### **Principle 1: Strategic Planning, Feasibility and Sustainability of the Academic Unit**

**Institutions must have developed an appropriate strategy for the establishment and operation of new academic units and the provision of new undergraduate study programmes. This strategy should be documented by specific feasibility and sustainability studies.**

*By decision of the institutional Senate, the Institutions should address in their strategy issues related to their academic structure in academic units and study programmes, which support the profile, the vision, the mission, and the strategic goal setting of the Institution, within a specific time frame. The strategy of the Institution should articulate the potential benefits, weaknesses, opportunities or risks from the operation of new academic units and study programmes, and plan all the necessary actions towards the achievement of their goals.*

*The strategy of their academic structure should be documented by specific feasibility and sustainability studies, especially for new academic units and new study programmes.*

*More specifically, the feasibility study of the new undergraduate study programmes should be accompanied by a four-year business plan to meet specific needs in infrastructure, services, human resources, procedures, financial resources, and management systems.*

*During the evaluation of the Institutions and their individual academic units in terms of meeting the criteria for the organisation of undergraduate study programmes, particular attention must be placed upon:*

#### **a. The academic profile and the mission of the academic unit**

*The profile and mission of the department should be specified. The scientific field of the department should be included in the internationally established scientific fields of Higher Education, as they are designated by the international categorisation of scientific fields in education, by UNESCO (ISCED 2013).*

#### **b. The strategy of the Institution for its academic development**

*The academic development strategy for the operation of the department and the new study programme should be set out. This strategy should result from the investigation of the factors that influence the studies and the research in the scientific field, the investigation of the institutional, economic, developmental, and social parameters that apply in the external environment of the Institution, as well as the possibilities and capabilities that exist within the internal environment (as reflected in a SWOT Analysis: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats). This specific analysis should demonstrate the reason for selecting the scientific field of the new department.*

#### **c. The documentation of the feasibility of the operation of the department and the study programme**

*The feasibility of the operation of the new department should be justified based on:*

- *the needs of the national and regional economy (economic sectors, employment, supply-demand, expected academic and professional qualifications)*
- *comparison with other national and international study programmes of the same scientific field*
- *the state-of-the-art developments*



- *the existing academic map; the differentiation of the proposed department from the already existing ones needs to be analysed, in addition to the implications of the current image of the academic map in the specific scientific field.*

**d. The documentation of the sustainability of the new department**

*Mention must be made to the infrastructure, human resources, funding perspective, services, and all other available resources in terms of:*

- *educational and research facilities (buildings, rooms, laboratories, equipment, etc.)*
- *staff (existing and new, by category, specialty, rank and laboratory). A distinct five-year plan is required, documenting the commitment of the School and of the Institution for filling in the necessary faculty positions to cover at least the entire pre-defined core curriculum*
- *funding (funding possibility from public or non-public sources)*
- *services (central, departmental / student support, digital, administrative, etc.)*

**e. The structure of studies**

*The structure of the studies should be briefly presented, namely:*

- **The organisation of studies:** *The courses and the categories to which they belong; the distribution of the courses into semesters; the alignment of the courses with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).*
- **Learning process:** *Documentation must be provided as to how the student-centered approach is ensured (modes of teaching and evaluation of students beyond the traditional methods).*
- **Learning outcomes:** *Knowledge, skills and competences acquired by graduates, as well as the professional rights awarded must be mentioned.*

**f. The number of admitted students**

- *The proposed number of admitted students over a five-year period should be specified.*
- *Any similar departments in other HEIs with the possibility of student transfers from / to the proposed department should be mentioned.*

**g. Postgraduate studies and research**

- *It is necessary to indicate research priorities in the scientific field, the opportunities for interdisciplinary research, the challenges towards new knowledge, possible research collaborations, etc.*
- *In addition, the postgraduate and doctoral programmes offered by the academic unit, the research projects performed, and the research performance of the faculty members should be mentioned.*

**Relevant documentation**

- *Introductory Report by the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) addressing the above points with the necessary documentation*
- *Updated Strategic Plan of the Institution that will include its proposed academic reconstruction, in view of the planned operation of new department(s) (incl. updated SWOT analysis at institutional level)*
- *Feasibility and sustainability studies for the establishment and operation of the new academic unit and the new study programme*
- *Four-year business plan*

## Study Programme Compliance

- The EEAP found the strategy and SWOT analyses for HMU very detailed and informative starting from how the university complies with the three (or four if accounting for the 'strengthening' base) pillars of Horizon Europe to the employment of HMU graduates to the funding status and opportunities for each of its Units
- The DAG strategic plan follows the mission, vision, and strategic planning of HMU and is clearly documented and articulated
- DAG has clearly articulated its academic profile, mission, and vision
- EEAP found that the DAG 4-year business plan and feasibility/sustainability analyses are specific, thorough and present implementation and conclusion guidelines based on three main themes: Excellence in science/state of the art science, economic needs and comparisons with sister programs
- EEAP could not fully assess the structure of the studies given that DAG just started the 7<sup>th</sup> semester of its existence. Still, the department provided data that were used in this assessment: Courses and the categories they belong to are clearly described and faculty assures that learning is done appropriately even if this means that they work extra time to achieve this.
- DAG has a clear strategy on the optimal number of admitted students to assure high quality education
- The Unit have clear research priorities that fit the needs of its stakeholders and faculty seize opportunities for interdisciplinary research and advancement of science through collaboration with other disciplines
- The number of graduate students is adequate for a department the size of DAG. There is a lag in the doctoral student numbers. When it comes to scientific output DAG is a two-tier department: There is a good number of faculty with high grant activity and research output (as accessed by h-index and citations) whereas there are others that have minimal input in both areas
- HMU and DAG function very efficiently. They have articulated goals, with clear objectives, appropriate action items and distinct timelines. The EEAP want to congratulate both for a work well-done
- DAG is the most extroverted of all departments three members of the EEAP have evaluated. EEAP would congratulate DAG because it clearly has a pulse on local society and work to address issues as they arise

- The curriculum of the first six semesters is well received by the students. Yet the number of elective courses (to be taught in the future) is rather small accounting for just over 10% of the total ECTS
- The last criterion for principle 1 is multifaceted as the mission of a TEI does not perfectly align with that of a University. It may have been that in the past TEI faculty did not have to publish or aggressively pursue external funding something that is the cornerstone for a successful university faculty career

HMU and DAG clearly know their role in local and Greek society, having a clear mission and vision. Both entities have done an excellent job in their respective SWOT analyses, and they have clearly articulated business and feasibility/sustainability plans for the near future. Yet nothing is perfect, especially when it comes to a new Unit. EEAP feels that a clear area of improvement is the output of some faculty members that do not correspond to what is expected from a University faculty member.

### Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 1: Strategic planning, feasibility and sustainability of the academic unit</b>	
<b>a. The academic profile and the mission of the academic unit</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
<b>b. The strategy of the Institution for its academic development</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
<b>c. The documentation of the feasibility of the operation of the Department and the study programme</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
<b>d. The documentation of the sustainability of the new Department</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	

Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
<b>e. The structure of studies</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
<b>f. The number of admitted students</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
<b>g. Postgraduate studies</b>	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	<b>X</b>
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

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

### Panel Recommendations

Even though mission and vision are clear, the Unit should work on making those more 'marketable'; transforming them into statements. As an example, EEAP provides those prepared for a sister Unit:

#### *Vision*

*The Department is a global leader in .....; promoting human, animal, and plant health, environmental sustainability, and food security.*

#### *Mission*

*The Department serves science and society through discovery, translation and dissemination of knowledge and resources to promote human, animal, and plant health, environmental sustainability, and food security.*

#### *Core Values*

*Foster interdisciplinary and synergistic collaboration.*

*Champion a supportive, diverse, and inclusive environment.*

*Support innovation and excellence.*

*Ensure scientific integrity.*

*Engage and serve our stakeholders.*

- HMU and DAG should implement standards (e.g., a minimum h-index, citations) for faculty promotion.
- There needs to be a coordinated effort to recruit higher numbers of doctoral students, which should be on average one doctoral student per faculty.

## Principle 2: Quality Assurance Policy of the Institution and the Academic Unit

The Institution should have in place an accredited Internal Quality Assurance System, and should formulate and apply a Quality Assurance Policy, which is part of its strategy, specialises in the operation of the new academic units and the new study programmes, and is accompanied by annual quality assurance goals for the continuous development and improvement of the academic units and the study programmes.

*The quality assurance policy of the Institution must be formulated in the form of a published statement, which is implemented by all stakeholders. It focuses on the achievement of special annual quality goals related to the quality assurance of the new study programme offered by the academic unit. In order to implement this policy, the Institution, among others, commits itself to put into practice quality procedures that will demonstrate: the adequacy and quality of the academic unit's resources; the suitability of the structure and organisation of the curriculum; the appropriateness of the qualifications of the teaching staff; the quality of support services of the academic unit and its staffing with appropriate administrative personnel. The Institution also commits itself to conduct an annual internal evaluation of the new undergraduate programme (UGP), realised by the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG) in collaboration with the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) of the Institution.*

*The quality assurance policy of the academic unit includes its commitment to implement quality procedures that will demonstrate: a) the adequacy of the structure and organisation of the curriculum, b) the pursuit of learning outcomes and qualifications in accordance with the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education, c) the promotion of the quality and effectiveness of the teaching work, d) the adequacy of the qualifications of the teaching staff, e) the promotion of the quality and quantity of the research work of the members of the academic unit, f) the ways of linking teaching with research, g) the level of demand for graduates' qualifications in the labour market, h) the quality of support services, such as administration, libraries and student care, i) the implementation of an annual review and audit of the quality assurance system of the UGP through the cooperation of the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG) with the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) of the Institution.*

### Relevant documentation

- Revised Quality Assurance Policy of the Institution
- Quality Assurance Policy of the academic unit
- Quality target setting of the Institution and the academic unit (utilising the S.M.A.R.T. methodology)

### Study Programme Compliance

- DAG created the 5 year UP in 2019 and is of the quality expected at the national and international levels. It is deemed appropriate and similar to those of the other nine sister GR
- DAG monitor and measure KPIs that are available to students and stakeholders
- The linkage between education and research is a vital component of the programme. It gives the students an excellent chance to create a strong bond with the many

opportunities they may pursue after graduation. Furthermore, students and future graduates acquire experience(s) that assist them in job placement

- The program fully complies with the European and the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education regarding learning outcomes and qualifications.
- The academic staff is qualified, enthusiastic, and motivated. Average research output is adequate but can be improved with the addition of faculty lines
- Students overwhelmingly stated that the teaching staff are qualified and knowledgeable. They provide substantial and unwavering tutoring and support to help academically struggling students
- DAG demonstrated that it has a process in place which allows for monitoring and corrections so as to meet its goals.

DAG fully complies with the quality assurance policy (QAP). The University has established a MODIP to define the review processes clearly, oversee improvement efforts, and calculate Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The MODIP monitors DAG OMEA. DAG has set goals for the UP that are specific, measurable and have clear timetables. Overall, the EEAP noted the academic unit's well-structured QAP. The Department is fully committed to implement a quality policy that promotes the academic profile and orientation of the UP.

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

- DAG must conduct exit interviews with all graduates and collect reliable census data based on a structured questionnaire. In addition, comments about all aspects of the student experience should be collected and analysed regularly. Sentiment analysis and text analytics should be used to tell the story of the alumni experience.
- Close contact with the stakeholders, and social partners should be maintained. Regular retreats, where the UP is discussed, should include alumni and stakeholder input.
- EEAP noted that all stakeholders are eager to continue working with DAG which in turn should maintain the excellent collaborations with industry

- OMEA reports with the yearly KPI's should be published on the DGA website, promoting transparency, and assisting with future improvements.

EEAP was impressed by the willingness of DAG to adopt and maintain the most effective procedures and processes to ensure quality assurance standards specified by HAHE/MODIP/OMEA.



### **Principle 3: Design, Approval and Monitoring of the Quality of the New Undergraduate Programmes**

Institutions should design the new undergraduate programmes following a defined written process, which will involve the participants, information sources and the approval committees for the programme. The objectives, the expected learning outcomes, the intended professional qualifications and the ways to achieve them are set out in the programme design. The above details, as well as information on the programme's structure, are published in the Student Guide.

*The Institutions develop their new undergraduate study programmes, following a well-defined procedure. The academic profile, the identity and orientation of the programme, the objectives, the subject areas, the structure and organisation, the expected learning outcomes and the intended professional qualifications according to the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education are described at this stage. An important new element in the structure of the programmes is the introduction of courses for the acquisition of digital skills. The above components should be taken into consideration and constitute the subject of the programme design, which, among other things, should include: elements of the Institution's strategy, labour market data and employment prospects of graduates, smooth progression of students throughout the stages of the programme, the anticipated student workload according to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), the option of providing work experience to the students, the linking of teaching and research, the international experience in study programmes of similar disciplines, the relevant regulatory framework, and the official procedure for the approval of the programme by the Institution.*

*The procedure of approval or revision of the programmes provides for the verification of compliance with the basic requirements of the Standards by the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU).*

#### **Relevant documentation**

- *Senate decision for the establishment of the UGP*
- *Curriculum structure: courses, course categories (including courses for the acquisition of digital skills), ECTS awarded, expected learning outcomes according to the EQF, internship, mobility opportunities.*
- *Labour market data regarding the employment of graduates, international experience in a related scientific field.*
- *Student Guide*
- *Course outlines*
- *Teaching staff (list of areas of specialisation, its relation to the courses taught, employment relationship)*
- *QAU minutes for the internal evaluation of the new study programme and its compliance with the Standards*

#### **Study Programme Compliance**

DAG UP curriculum is well established and similar to many sister Greek programs. DAG offers a 5-year programme of undergraduate studies that includes three

specializations/concentrations. For the first three years, students follow a shared study, and during the last two, they elect one of the specializations. The current undergraduate program has been in effect from 2019. The program currently consists of 320 ECTS; including a Thesis (30 ECTS) and practical training (20 ECTS). Students actively participate in the pedagogical process through laboratory and hands-on exercises in several courses. Practical training adds to the total educational experience. The strengths of the DAG undergraduate programme lie on the spectrum of fields covered as well as on the integration of fieldwork and practical training. Links between research and teaching do exist. These will become more obvious as the program evolves and matures. DAG should regularly update course contents and learning objectives to provide additional learning and critical analysis skills. The course syllabi included the required learning outcomes.

- The high number of admitted students in the first two years of the program could curtail the student progress potential and, indirectly, the quality of the study program. EEAP foresees that the high number of admitted students may result in an unsustainable faculty/student ratio affecting the timeline at which students can complete their Theses.
- Although the UP is still in its infancy, EEAP notes that DAG maintains a monitoring committee and an Advisory Board, which in collaboration with the other authorities, oversee the implementation, progress, and future needs of the program.
- Stakeholders were positive when it comes to graduate knowledge and abilities. A member of the group noted the need for a course in greenhouse material science. They all commented on the dedication of faculty and staff to the DAG success. They attested that future graduates meet the expectations of the Geotechnical Chamber of Greece.

In conclusion, the Panel has found that the DAG fully complies with Principle 3.

### Panel Judgement

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

<b>The External Evaluation &amp; Accreditation Panel agrees that this Programme leads to a Level 7 Qualification according to the National &amp; European Qualifications Framework (Integrated Master)</b>	YES	NO*
	<b>X</b>	



### **Panel Recommendations**

- The UP should offer direct, quantitative comparisons to similar curricula in renowned global programs to meet self-imposed requirements for excellence and enhance its reputation and status
- The number of incoming students should stabilize to current admissions levels (~100)
- Key stakeholders and external partners should be consulted in future changes of the UP

## **Principle 4: Student-centred Approach in Learning, Teaching and Assessment of Students**

The academic unit should ensure that the new undergraduate programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process. The assessment methods should reflect this approach.

*In the implementation of student-centered learning and teaching, the academic unit:*

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

### **Relevant documentation**

- *Questionnaires for assessment by the students*
- *Regulation for dealing with students' complaints and appeals*
- *Regulation for the function of the academic advisor*
- *Reference to the planned teaching modes and assessment methods*

### **Study Programme Compliance**

- DAG has developed a very analytical UP where elective courses are not well represented. The majority of the courses have theoretical and laboratory/field exercises
- The syllabus describes the content and the learning outcomes of each course, as well as the knowledge assessment procedures. Assessment is done through laboratory or/and assignments, small group projects and regular examinations. Teaching includes a variety of pedagogical methods including audio-visual, e-class platform, and e-mail. The UP does not have prerequisite courses
- Students have the opportunity to gain Digital Competence according to the ESCO assessment tool
- Students are assigned a Thesis project (30 ECTS) in the 10<sup>th</sup> semester. Each faculty member has ~5 HMU students assigned per year and an irregular number from the TEI era of the department
- Currently a number of almost 80 students from the former TEI structure have used their right to follow the new 5-year programme but nobody yet has graduated with the new degree

- Evaluation of teaching performance is measured through student surveys. Students may complete a carefully designed and detailed questionnaire including comments for all courses. DAG has analysed the questionnaires and when appropriate has taken measures to improve teaching based on the feedback. EEAP noted the moderate to low participation of students in course evaluations and acknowledges that the low percentage is biased as participation in actively enrolled students is considerably higher
- Students are aware of the Academic Advisor, and some have found it useful. Nevertheless, students claimed that most faculty are very open to meetings and discussions with them whenever needed independent of the advisor assigned to them
- A complaint/appeal process is in place and is described in detail

All in all, the curriculum and the teaching staff helps students and meet the demands of the work market.

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

- There should be a suite of prerequisite courses for students after the 7th semester to be able to adapt/succeed to their senior courses
- Student participation in the course evaluations must be further encouraged
- Evaluation of the teaching quality must be analysed based on active student numbers and results should be presented clearly in internal review reports
- Future revisions of the UP must include student feedback
- DAG must promote the involvement of students in UP reforms and student-involved committees (advisory board, digital services, funding needs, etc.)

## **Principle 5: Student Admission, Progression, Recognition of Academic Qualifications and Award of Degrees and Certificates of Competence of the New Study Programmes**

**Academic units should develop and apply published regulations addressing all aspects and phases of studies of the programme (admission, progression, recognition and degree award).**

*All the issues from the beginning to the end of studies should be governed by the internal regulations of the academic units. Indicatively:*

- ✓ *the registration procedure of the admitted students and the necessary documents - according to the law - and the support of the newly admitted students*
- ✓ *student rights and obligations, and monitoring of student progression*
- ✓ *internship issues, granting of scholarships*
- ✓ *the procedures and terms for writing the thesis (diploma or degree)*
- ✓ *the procedure of award and recognition of degrees, the duration of studies, the conditions for progression and assurance of the progress of students in their studies*

*as well as*

- ✓ *the terms and conditions for enhancing student mobility*

*Appropriate recognition procedures rely on relevant academic practice for recognition of credits among various European academic departments and Institutions in line with the principles of the Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region. Graduation represents the culmination of the students' study period. Students need to receive documentation explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes, and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed (Diploma Supplement).*

*All the above must be made public within the context of the Student Guide.*

### **Relevant documentation**

- *Internal regulation for the operation of the new study programme*
- *Regulation of studies, internship, mobility and student assignments*
- *Printed Diploma Supplement*

*Certificate from the President of the academic unit that the diploma supplement is awarded to all graduates without exception together with the degree or the certificate of completion of studies*

### **Study Programme Compliance**

- The EEAP meetings with DEP staff highlighted the high potential of the UP, something that stakeholders also confirmed. All employees demonstrated dedication to student training

- DGA does not have control over the number of admitted students. One hundred three (103)/112 admitted students in 2022 successfully enrolled in the 1<sup>st</sup> year of the program
- The program also welcomed 42 transfer students from sister programs in the past three years. Any undergraduate degree holders can be admitted to the program through advanced placement exams. They are enrolled in the 1<sup>st</sup> semester when they have no-relevant degree; 3<sup>rd</sup> semester when they have a semi-relevant degree; and 5<sup>th</sup> when they have a relevant degree
- Incoming students receive detailed instructions on how to access the University services during an orientation session. The DAG website provides a brief description of the program and an overview of its mission and vision
- Students have access to free meals and low-cost accommodation facilities, special educational, counselling, psychological, and legal support, a well-equipped gym, a medical treatment facility, and a day-care centre for toddlers of 2.5-5 years of age
- HMU supports student mobility and participation in professional activities; however, only a few students take advantage of ERASMUS+. This will probably change as the new program matures
- Students attain practical training through lab/greenhouse/field work, several field trips, and summer internships. A Thesis is mandatory, and a final examination committee assures content quality.

All in all, DGA is addressing all aspects and phases of studies of the programme.

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

- Improve and update the website, providing additional information on facilities, research activities and accomplishments, as well as engagement
- Develop guidelines that will clearly define the requirements for the execution of the Thesis and final examination
- Recognize Faculty, staff, and student successes through awards and press releases



- Enhance student engagement and participation in local, national, and international professional activities (i.e., seminars/webinars, stakeholder events, ERASMUS+ network program)

## **Principle 6: Ensuring the Competence and High Quality of the Teaching Staff of the New Undergraduate Study Programmes**

**Institutions should assure themselves of the competence, the level of knowledge and skills of the teaching staff of the academic units, and apply fair and transparent processes for their recruitment, training and further development.**

*The Institution should attend to the adequacy of the teaching staff of the academic unit, the appropriate staff-student ratio, the suitable categories of staff, the appropriate subject areas and specialisations, the fair and objective recruitment process, the high research performance, the training – development, the staff development policy (including participation in mobility schemes, conferences and educational leaves- as mandated by law).*

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

### **Relevant documentation**

- *Procedures and criteria for teaching staff recruitment*
- *Regulations or employment contracts, and obligations of the teaching staff*
- *Policy for staff recruitment, support and development*
- *Performance of the teaching staff in scientific-research and teaching work, also based on internationally recognised systems of scientific evaluation (e.g., Google Scholar, Scopus, etc.)*

### **Study Programme Compliance**

- The DAG faculty roster was established with the inception of the department. The vast majority had corresponding appointments to the TEI of Crete and transferred to DAG
- All faculty have doctoral degrees. The hiring process is based on applicant merit, credentials, and is administered by the Department. DAG does not have hiring autonomy and the Ministry controls faculty lines. Hiring opportunities for permanent or tenure-track positions are limited. Faculty are assisted by temporary hires, known as ‘407 plan’ appointments. Those appointees also carry a doctoral degree
- The expertise of all faculty is closely affiliated with ‘traditional’ agriculture disciplines. Effort distribution (teaching/research/service) is not formalized
- The mean 2018-2022 faculty h-index is ~12 but varies significantly between individuals. This number is well-below index values observed in sister institutions. The latest

average five-year cumulative number of citations/faculty was 856. About 40% of all research publications were in peer reviewed journals

- For that same period each faculty had an average of four funded projects corresponding to ~310K euro per faculty and ~6.5 euro million for the department
- The faculty/student ratio for the last two academic years is high (26 and 30 respectively). In 2019 & 2020, the number of admitted undergraduate students exceeded 200, more than double of what was requested. In the past two years admissions linger ~ 100
- Faculty are formally obliged to teach 8 hours per week, but this has been elevated to about 10 hours in the past two years, making professional development activities unrealistic
- Stakeholders endorse the DAG contributions to the economy and its positive influence on the local communities
- Faculty should prepare impact statements that can be used to promote department further
- Several of the faculty are leaders in establishing interdisciplinary research teams and obtain funding; providing invaluable resources and services to stakeholders
- The imbalance in the faculty/staff ratio in comparison to sister programs needs to be addressed immediately whereas there should be a more equitable balance in the number of faculty supporting the three specializations
- DAG is successfully focusing on translational research with strong affiliations with stakeholders
- Faculty skills, collaborative spirit, industry affiliations, and existing leadership within the Institution set a strong foundation for future excellence. Being the only Agriculture department in Crete offers unique and potentially exciting opportunities
- New expertise needs to be added to support analytics, Big Data, bioethics, and sustainability. Government and educational institutions should support those efforts in tangible ways

In conclusion, the Panel has found that the DAG substantially complies with the Principle 6.

## Panel Judgement

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

## Panel Recommendations

- The Ministry should approve at least four new tenure-track positions for the Department; 407-type appointments should not become permanent practice because, with rare exceptions, they are incompatible with the support of research initiatives and Programs
- Attract new faculty that can serve multiple areas of research/teaching given the constraints and needs according to the student specialization areas
- Encourage and support regular professional development activities for faculty and staff
- Demand higher research productivity in the form of peer reviewed publications. This will increase the visibility standing and ranking of the department relative to its peers domestically and internationally
- Consider annual teaching and research awards for faculty and staff
- Use refereed publications and funding as indicators of excellence

## **Principle 7: Learning Resources and Student Support of the New Undergraduate Programmes**

**Institutions should have adequate funding to meet the needs for the operation of the academic unit and the new study programme as well as the means to cover all their teaching and learning needs. They should -on the one hand- provide satisfactory infrastructure and services for learning and student support and -on the other hand- facilitate direct access to them by establishing internal rules to this end (e.g., lecture rooms, laboratories, libraries, networks, boarding, career and social policy services, etc.).**

*Institutions and their academic units must have sufficient resources, on a planned and long-term basis, to support learning and academic activity in general, in order to offer students the best possible level of studies. The above means include facilities such as, the necessary general and specific libraries and possibilities for access to electronic databases, study rooms, educational and scientific equipment, information and communication services, support and counselling services. When allocating the available resources, the needs of all students must be taken into consideration (e.g. whether they are full-time or part-time students, employed students, students with disabilities), in addition to the shift towards student-centred learning and the adoption of flexible modes of learning and teaching. Support activities and facilities may be organised in various ways, depending on the institutional context. Students should be informed about all available services. In delivering support services, the role of support and administration staff is crucial and therefore this segment of staff needs to be qualified and have opportunities to develop its competences.*

### **Relevant documentation**

- *Detailed description of the infrastructure and services made available by the Institution to the academic unit to support learning and academic activity (human resources, infrastructure, services, etc.) and the corresponding specific commitment of the Institution to financially cover these infrastructure-services from state or other resources*
- *Administrative support staff of the new undergraduate programme (job descriptions, qualifications and responsibilities)*
- *Informative / promotional material given to students with reference to the available services*

### **Study Programme Compliance**

- **EEAP noted the good quality of an adequate number of facilities dedicated to supporting the study program and students. DAG operates a unified Room Reservation System (MRBS), which enables the best possible utilization of all the Institution's lecture rooms. All lecture rooms and labs are equipped with Internet and audio-visual facilities. In addition, DAG has a multimedia room, a reading room for students, educational and research laboratories, and offices**
- **Students have access to the University Library and to all the online journal subscriptions and databases through VPN (single sign-on). Students are well informed of the different support services available and indicated that they have good access to them. Moreover, the entire educational process is supported by the e-class platform, an**

integrated electronic course management system that supports asynchronous distance education

- The University Farm exceeds 30 hectares. There are educational, demonstration and research infrastructures, as well as model crops in which students practice their skills
- During the tour and discussions, it became clear that laboratories and farm facilities satisfactorily cover the learning needs. Some laboratory equipment could be increased in terms of quantity [e.g., there are twenty (20) microscopes available and often students have to share the use of them]
- The Department and the Hellenic Mediterranean University institutionally provide counselling/advocating/complaint and objection management services to students. Staff have an "open-door" policy to help students with their studies and reduce drop-out rates
- DAG offers scholarships based on performance and/or socio-economic criteria. DAG informs students of scholarships offered by other institutions/agencies/organizations
- Student placement is enhanced by "Career Days" organized by DAG. In the 2022 event, a total of 69 companies and organizations participated; interacting with over 300 students/graduates
- DAG provides additional support services: medical care (the HMU clinic provides primary health care and treatment to students and staff) and kindergarten. Nevertheless, EEAP did not observe emergency response procedures/training protocols for the DAG buildings, a possible liability for the university.
- Teaching staff and students expressed their satisfaction with the efficiency of the Secretariat in robust terms, though it was underlined that it is understaffed, and new lines should be added.
- The Department's website is bilingual (Greek/English), well structured, user-friendly, and up to date, allowing students to be informed about all available services and regulations

In conclusion, the Panel has found that the DAG fully complies with the Principle 7.

### Panel Judgement

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

## **Panel Recommendations**

- DAG working closely with the University authorities, should maintain the generous levels of infrastructure available and ensure the continuous upkeep of the facilities
- The DAG/HMU should implement an emergency response procedure and frequent emergency drills
- The Department should consider the enhancement of extracurricular activities such as organization of a pedagogical proficiency training course.

## **Principle 8: Collection, Analysis and Use of Information for the Organisation and Operation of New Undergraduate Programmes**

**The Institutions and their academic units bear full responsibility for collecting, analysing and using information, aimed at the efficient management of undergraduate programmes of study and related activities, in an integrated, effective and easily accessible way.**

*Effective procedures for collecting and analysing information on the operation of Institutions, academic units and study programmes feed data into the internal quality assurance system. The following data is of interest: key performance indicators for the student body profile, student progression, success and drop-out rates, student satisfaction with the programme, availability of learning resources and student support. The completion of the fields of National Information System for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (NISQA) should be correct and complete with the exception of the fields that concern graduates in which a null value is registered.*

### **Relevant documentation**

- *Report from the National Information System for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (NISQA) at the level of the Institution, the department and the new UGP*
- *Operation of an information management system for the collection of administrative data for the implementation of the programme (Students' Record)*
- *Other tools and procedures designed to collect data on the academic and administrative functions of the academic unit and the study programme*

### **Study Programme Compliance**

There are platforms/structures that gather, analyse, and utilize data and information relative to the UP:

- HMU wide-based MODIP
  - DAG information management system
  - ERASMUS management system
  - Career Office management system
- Students can evaluate academic staff and courses via anonymous surveys. Participation rates are rather low.

Student satisfaction surveys are conducted regularly, usually between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> week of courses. DAG uses a web-based software called e-class for the submission of the surveys. There is no evidence of a formal internal process for analysing and acting based on the evaluation, yet EEAP understands that such matters are discussed at the General assembly of DAG.

- DAG is still in transition and only limited data was provided to EEAP. The panel did not obtain KPIs such as student retention/progression, academic success, research quality, etc.



- Employability and career paths of graduates are not available as DAG is yet to graduate a student from the current New Undergraduate Study Program
- OMEA seems to have a good and effective relationship with the University's MODIP.

In conclusion, the Panel has found that the DAG substantially complies with Principle 8

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

- The statistics provided covered solely the improvement of teaching and other services offered to students and academic staff. However, there are data missing from those results summary evaluation statistics such as the sample size of the students participating in the evaluation representing % of students that completing it.
- Encourage students to complete surveys for all classes. A suggestion is to link the completion of the survey to the release of class grades.
- The HMU alumni/career office is encouraged to prepare methodology and procedures to collect employment data and provide info on career paths and employability of graduates

## Principle 9: Public Information Concerning the New Undergraduate Programmes

Institutions and academic units should publish information about their teaching and academic activities in a direct and readily accessible way. The relevant information should be up-to-date, clear and objective.

*Information on the Institutions' activities is useful for prospective and current students, graduates, other stakeholders and the public. Therefore, Institutions and their academic units must provide information about their activities, including the new undergraduate programmes they offer, the intended learning outcomes, the degrees awarded, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, the pass rates and the learning opportunities available to their students. Information is also provided, to the extent possible, on graduate employment perspectives.*

### Relevant documentation

- *Dedicated segment on the website of the department for the promotion of the new study programme*
- *Bilingual version of the website of the academic unit with complete, clear and objective information*
- *Provision for website maintenance and updating*

### Study Programme Compliance

- All essential information regarding DAG, studies, announcements, activities, conferences/symposia, and contact information is available in separate tabs both in Greek and English and easily accessible on the departmental website
- The UP information is unambiguously laid out and detailed, describing the tripartite: knowledge, skills, and abilities
- In a separate section, information about the teaching faculty members and staff with their contact details, a brief description of research interests, a link to their CV and the current course load is also available
- There is a dedicated segment on the DAG front page for the promotion of the new study program, aiming to promote its attractiveness, according to:
  - ✓ An explanatory text by the administration entitled "Mission and Vision" (<https://agro.hmu.gr/en/department-2/mission-and-vision/>)
  - ✓ Video with the curation of the Department showcasing the infrastructure and facilities of the School and its experimental farm: <https://youtu.be/Gy19 TeXmV8>
  - ✓ A general presentation on the Hellenic Mediterranean University – ELMÉPA presenting key features of the University, facilities, networking etc. (<https://hmu.gr/parousiasi-elmepa/epilego-elmepa/>)

- Also available is the program of studies, the current year's study guide, information on course registration with a link to the electronic registration webpage, a brief description of the assistance offered by academic advisors alongside a form that can be filled in and submitted.
- It should be noted that some sections are available only in Greek (e.g., studies, the Department).
- Connection with the following services is easily achieved through relevant links from the front page of the website, addressing student needs with direct access to:
  - Virtual private network (VPN)
  - E-classes
  - Eydoxos portal (distribution management of books)
  - Kalippos portal (distribution management of scientific publications and e-books)
  - E-secretariat
  - Academic webmail
  - Erasmus exchange programme
  - Academic id
  - Student care
  - Counselling and psychological support of students
  - Library and information centre
  - Student advocate support
- EEAP advised DAG that the scope of the Department should become more prevalent and the advice was immediately implemented by updating a relevant post the next day (<https://agro.hmu.gr/en/department-2/mission-and-vision/>)
- No information exists on the graduates of the Department since its maturity lies in the third (3<sup>rd</sup>) year of the study program, a current deficiency that will surely be rectified in 2024
- The Department has not a strong presence on popular social media, i.e., Facebook and Instagram. The relevant links in the frontpage of the DAG's website are not active

In conclusion, the Panel has found that the DAG fully complies with Principle 9.

### Panel Judgement

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

### **Panel Recommendations**

- The website should deliver relevant information with environmental, social, and economic responsibility contributions addressing local stakeholders and the general public
- In terms of public information, with the curation of a career counsellor videos and other promotional material(s) could be produced under the theme “Why should I study in the Department of Agriculture of Hellenic Mediterranean University?”

## Principle 10: Periodic Internal Review of the New Study Programmes

Institutions and academic units should have in place an internal quality assurance system, for the audit and annual internal review of their new programmes, so as to achieve the objectives set for them, through monitoring and amendments, with a view to continuous improvement. Any actions taken in the above context, should be communicated to all parties concerned.

*Regular monitoring, review and revision of the new study programmes aim at maintaining the level of educational provision and creating a supportive and effective learning environment for students. The above comprise the evaluation of: the content of the programme in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up to date; the changing needs of society; the students' workload, progression and completion; the effectiveness of the procedures for the assessment of students; the students' expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme; the learning environment, support services, and their fitness for purpose for the programme. Programmes are reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders. The information collected is analysed and the programme is adapted to ensure that it is up-to-date.*

### **Relevant documentation**

- *Procedure for the re-evaluation, redefinition and updating of the curriculum*
- *Procedure for mitigating weaknesses and upgrading the structure of the UGP and the learning process*
- *Feedback processes on strategy implementation and quality targeting of the new UGP and relevant decision-making processes (students, external stakeholders)*
- *Results of the annual internal evaluation of the study programme by the QAU and the relevant minutes*

### **Study Programme Compliance**

- The DAG UP is reviewed regularly by OMEA. All students are requested to evaluate the attended courses using an electronic questionnaire. Each questionnaire includes 13 course-related, ten instructor-related, and seven student-related questions. The student uses a 5-point Likert scale (1: Poor; 2: Below average; 3: Average; 4: Above average; and 5: Excellent) that allows comparisons of students' opinions through time.
- For the academic year 2021-2022, student participation in the evaluation process was 33 ± 16%, which was increased by 19% compared to previous years; however, it is still considered low.
- The meeting between EEAP and students, the latter expressed their concerns about anonymity and confidentiality as well as whether instructors can view course evaluations before or after the final grades are due. OMEA needs to better inform the students about the evaluation process, address any concerns, and encourage participation.

In conclusion, the Panel has found that the DAG fully complies with Principle 10

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

- Develop strategies that will increase course evaluation participation (i.e., demonstrate the value of evaluation, allow time to complete questionnaires during class, or organize special sessions)
- Add open-ended questions to allow students to elaborate on important aspects or express concerns not addressed elsewhere
- Post course evaluation results on the DAG website

## **Principle 11: Regular External Evaluation and Accreditation of the New Undergraduate Programmes**

The new undergraduate study programmes should regularly undergo evaluation by panels of external experts set by HAHE, aiming at accreditation. The results of the external evaluation and accreditation are used for the continuous improvement of the Institutions, academic units and study programmes. The term of validity of the accreditation is determined by HAHE.

*HAHE is responsible for administrating the programme accreditation process which is realised as an external evaluation procedure and implemented by a panel of independent experts. HAHE grants accreditation of programmes, based on the Reports submitted by the panels, with a specific term of validity, following to which revision is required. The accreditation of the quality of the programmes acts as a means of verification of the compliance of the programme with the Standards, and as a catalyst for improvement, while opening new perspectives towards the international standing of the awarded degrees. Both academic units and institutions must consistently consider the conclusions and the recommendations submitted by the panels of experts for the continuous improvement of the programme.*

### **Relevant documentation**

- *Progress report on the results from the utilisation of the recommendations of the external evaluation of the Institution and of the IQAS Accreditation Report.*

### **Study Programme Compliance**

The EEAP could not assess the specific principle accordingly due to two reasons; DAG is a newly established Department based on the new transition law of the former TEI structure and the Department has never had before any other external evaluation. The lack of a pre-evaluation report does not contribute efficiently to the verification of the programme's continuous evolution and improvements.

Nevertheless, the EEAP will evaluate the specific principle taking into account the HAHE documentation under evaluation, the internal review report and the assessment of each of the Principles.

The HAHE with an Information Notice (04.05.22) asked from the EEAP to take into consideration, apart from the rest of the revised documentation submitted from the Department, some specific Annexes when evaluating the principle. The Department submitted even more concise and uniform data to the panel for this accreditation that also concern the aforementioned annexes as well.

The syllabus of the UP is considered to be revised greatly, in comparison to the one established with the former structure of the Institution, but some changes has yet to be performed (delivery mode, prerequisites courses, specialty courses).

The DAG teaching staff should be encouraged to publish in peer-reviewed international journals and increase its H-index far more than the 12 indicated by them so far.

The MODIP has produced a quite detailed and precise report including all the major advantages and deficiencies of the UP. All the findings were used to design an action plan with all the necessary parameters (recommendations, deliverables, corrective actions, timeframes, etc.) and a subsequent monitoring programme. The application of this monitoring programme can be considered successful since the anticipated results were measurable and exceeded 70% in most cases. The corrective actions along with the results claimed were cross-checked by the EEAP.

Moreover, the Regulation of Studies, based on the former one (TEI Crete), has been renewed and complemented but with a need to be amended shortly after the application of the recommendations and updates proposed by the current evaluation report.

The regular Internal Review of the programme is vital for newly established UPs. Their success mainly depends on inclusion of all the representative stakeholders (academic and administrative staff, students, social partners, primary sector, retail-wholesale, industry, etc.) and carefully designed monitoring procedure if any findings occur. The internal review reports produced currently seem to acknowledge this need and must be continued in the same and more intensive manner.

Thus, the Panel has found that the DAG fully complies with Principle 11.

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

The DAG and QAU, based on the recommendations and the fact that no preliminary external evaluation report was available for the assessment from the EEAP, must update its four-year business plan and perform an intermediate internal review of its UP under the light of the recommendations made in the current evaluation.



## Principle 12: Monitoring the Transition from Previous Undergraduate Study Programmes to the New Ones

**Institutions and academic units apply procedures for the transition from previously existing undergraduate study programmes to new ones, in order to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Standards.**

*Applies in cases where the department implements, in addition to the new UGPs, any pre-existing UGPs from departments of former Technological Educational Institutions (TEI) or from departments that were merged / renamed / abolished.*

*Institutions should implement procedures for the transition from former UGPs to new ones, in order to ensure their compliance with the requirements of the Standards. More specifically, the institution and the academic unit must have a) the necessary learning resources, b) appropriate teaching staff, c) structured curriculum (courses, ECTS, learning outcomes), d) study regulations, award of diploma and diploma supplement, and e) system of data collection and use, with particular reference to the data of the graduates of the pre-existing UGP. In this context, the Institutions and the academic units prepare a plan for the foreseen transition period of the existing UGP until its completion, the costs caused to the Institution by its operation as well as possible measures and proposals for its smooth delivery and termination. This planning includes data on the transition and subsequent progression of students in the respective new UGP of the academic unit, as well as the specific graduation forecast for students enrolled under the previous status.*

### **Relevant documentation**

- *The planning of the Institution for the foreseen transition period, the operating costs and the specific measures or proposals for the smooth implementation and completion of the programme*
- *The study regulations, template for the degree and the diploma supplement*
- *Name list of teaching staff, status, subject and the course they teach / examine*
- *Report of Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) on the progress of the transition and the degree of completion of the programme. In the case of UGP of a former Technological Educational Institution (TEI), the report must include a specific reference to how the internship was implemented*

### **Study Programme Compliance**

- The DAG UP was founded in 2019. It is one of the 11 Agriculture Departments in the country, but unique for Crete and the Prefectures of South and North Aegean. The program has a newly developed curriculum and a well-established strategic plan with specific goals
- DAG is housed in a central building with one amphitheatre, four teaching classrooms, multiple labs, and several offices for faculty and staff. Research and teaching activity also occurs in a 30-hectare farm and several greenhouses. In addition, the under-development science-environmental-cultural park (CretAgroTech) aims to attract attention to the program and enhance scientific collaborations with national and international institutions
- The teaching and academic research staff includes 21 permanent and few visiting members, numbers that could increase under certain conditions. EEAP considers that

all members have the required education and skills to meet the teaching and research requirements. The program is supported by a small budget for Universities supplied by the ministry of Education, the National Development and Investment Program, National Strategic Reference Frameworks, and several research grants.

- The Department supports incoming students, as well as those of the former TEI to obtain a university-level degree with an integrated master (Level 7 of the National and European Qualifications Framework). The granted degree aligns with the skills and qualifications described in PD 344/2000.

In conclusion, the Panel has found that the DAG fully complies with Principle 12

### Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 12: Monitoring the transition from previous undergraduate study programmes to the new ones</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### Panel Recommendations

- Collect and analyse information on student participation
- Improve faculty: student ratio

## **PART C: CONCLUSIONS**

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

- EAAP was impressed by the infrastructure for hand-on learning which was in very close proximity to the lecture halls and is hopeful that this will only improve with the appropriated buildings and botanic garden expansion
- Very strong ties of DAG with stakeholders. Strong presence within and appreciation by the local community
- Willingness for improvement, cooperation, self-reflect
- Great spirit of cooperation between the department and MODIP
- Collaborative spirit and support amongst staff and students to levels that we had not previously encountered in sister departments my members of this panel

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

- Modest research output productivity in the form of refereed journal articles by some faculty
- Unbalanced faculty: student ratio
- Student advising beyond the first year is *ad hoc*
- Improved social channels of communication
- Improve dissemination of materials including entire course video lecture recordings and other information
- Improved career placement services and tracking of all alumni and future students of DAG
- Modern analytics and data science technologies (such as big data, machine learning, predictive modelling, AI, Spatial analysis, Functional Data Analysis) all topics covered in graduate research courses) need to be addressed in future curriculum updates.
- Future graduates need exposure to programming languages to be highly desired and competitive in the future marketplace.

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

- Attract faculty that can serve multiple areas of research/teaching given the constraints and needs according to the student specialization areas
- Assess and implement approaches to recognize excellence in teaching and research
- Increase student participation in governance and course evaluation
- Reward outperforming students with travel awards to scientific meetings funded by key stakeholders
- DAG has informal mechanisms to deal with underperforming faculty, at least in their teaching responsibilities. Develop policies
- Reduce the number of teaching personnel with low evaluation reports

- Good relations with key stakeholders and alumni should be maintained and explored further thru the advisory board that meets semi-annually
- The website could deliver ALL relevant impact information related to environmental, social, economic, and sustainable contributions of the faculty and DAG
- Reduce the number of required courses; accept and provide more opportunities for free online certification that will help prepare graduates for employment and enhance their comprehensiveness with additional practical training
- DAG should strive to improve research dissemination in peer-reviewed journals. They are currently lacking compared to some of the sister departments
- Provide further opportunities to former TEI students to complete the extra coursework to be awarded an AEI degree.
- The stakeholders should be consulted about revisions and future planning of UP
- The DAG UP should always offer direct, quantitative comparisons to sister departments to promote excellence and enhance its reputation and status among their peers
- Established links between research and teaching in the UP are evident. As the programme matures, DAG should access their infrastructure and make changes to provide an improved experiential learning experience
- The number of incoming students should stabilize
- The number of all types of staff need significant, targeted, additions
- Establish a strong presence in social media with an academic profile using tools that appeal to prospective students especially from other institutions
- Pursue funding sources from industry that would attract academic personnel from other institutions on sabbatical appointments
- Develop a seminar series featuring distinguished scientists that address state of the art topics. This could be a mixture of teleconference and face-to-face lectures

#### Addressed to the HMU

- The HMU alumni/career office is encouraged to prepare methodology and procedures to collect employment data and provide info on career paths and employability of graduates
- DAG working closely with the HMU authorities should maintain the present infrastructure and explore future improvements
- The DAG/HMU should impellent an emergency response procedure and frequent emergency drills

#### Addressed to the State Authorities

- Stabilize the number of incoming students to the current levels
- Increase the quality of the UP by investing in human capital, hiring additional personnel
- Increase student funding for practical training
- Provide funding mechanisms to attract and support external/guest lecturers that work on cutting-edge technologies.
- This excellent location in Crete should be exploited to attract more international students and expose them to the excellent agriculture product and practices of Crete
- The State should enhance DAG and HMU by creating a Food Science program that will collaborate and enhance DAG's impact on the growth of the region

#### IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: **1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, and 12.**

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **6 and 8.**

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

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

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

<b>The External Evaluation &amp; Accreditation Panel agrees that this Programme leads to a Level 7 Qualification according to the National &amp; European Qualifications Framework (Integrated Master)</b>	<b>YES</b> <b>X</b>	<b>NO</b>
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## The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

**Name and Surname**

**Signature**

**1. Prof. Andy Mauromoustakos (Chair)**

University of Arkansas, US

**2. Prof. Ioannis Tzanetakis**

University of Arkansas, US

**3. Prof. Stella Kantartzi**

Southern Illinois University, US

**4. Mr. Anestis Delepoglou**

Geotechnical Chamber of Greece, Thessaloniki, Greece

**5. Ms. Aphrodite Lioliou**

Student of Agriculture, International Hellenic University, Thessaloniki, Greece