



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



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Accreditation Report for the Undergraduate Study Programme of:

Language, Literature and Culture of the Black Sea Countries

Institution: Democritus University of Thrace

Date: 13 March 2021

Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the Undergraduate Study Programme of **Language, Literature and Culture of the Black Sea Countries** of the **Democritus University of Thrace** for the purposes of granting accreditation

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PART A: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW

I. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the Undergraduate Study Programme of **Language, Literature, and Culture of the Black Sea Countries** of the **Democritus University of Thrace** comprised the following four (4) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

1. Professor Anna PANAYOTOU-TRANTAPHYLLOPOULOU (Chair)

University of Cyprus, Republic of Cyprus

2. Assoc. Professor Alicia MORALES ORTIZ

Universidad de Murcia, Spain

3. Professor Stephanos EFTHYMIADIS

Open University of Cyprus, Republic of Cyprus

4. Professor George TSOULAS

University of York Heslington, York, United Kingdom

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

Before starting the online visit, the members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel (EEAP) received and studied a wide variety of documents provided in advance by HAHE, including the Department's Proposal for Accreditation, the Handbook of Studies (Οδηγός σπουδών) and the description of courses (Περιγράμματα μαθημάτων), the HAHE Guidelines and other relevant information about the Department (statistical data, quality indicators, student questionnaires, strategic goals, etc.). The EEAP consulted also the Department's Webpage and the other external evaluation reports.

Apart from the documentation that was sent previously by the HAHE, during the University online visit the EEAP received further presentation slides by the Head of Department, and the head of MODIP. The Panel also received further samples of student work, specifically theses. The Panel had in advance of the visit participated in an online information session provided by HAHE.

The visit started with a private meeting of the Panel on Monday 08/03/2021.

On Tuesday, 09 of March at 15.00 the EEAP had a welcoming online meeting with the Vice Rector and President of MODIP Prof. Z. Gavriilidou, and with the Head of the Department, Prof. E. Petropoulos. Additional information was provided by Professor M. Dimasi, former Head of the Department. Prof. Gavriilidou gave a short overview of the current situation of the University and provided the EEAP with information about its Quality Assurance Procedures. Prof. Petropoulos made a brief presentation of the history of the Department and current status and explained various aspects concerning the Department's strategic goals, academic profile, study programme structure, teaching staff etc.

After that, the EEAP had the following online meetings:

- i. 15.45-17.45: MODIP representatives and members of OMEA (Internal Evaluation Committee of Department). They explained the Department's evaluation processes and answered all questions addressed by the EEAP.
- ii. 19.00-19.45: Teaching Staff. The EEAP met teaching staff members. The four sections of the Department (Romanian, Bulgarian, Russian, and Turkish languages) were represented as well as members of the Department with different specialisations such as International Law, Archaeology, History, Comparative Linguistics, etc. In this meeting the EEAP discussed topics related to teaching methodologies, link between teaching and research, financial issues, mobility, workload, career development and research opportunities.
- iii. 20.00-20.45: Undergraduate students of different semesters of the Programme. The EEAP asked the students about their experience with the Programme and generally with the Department. They expressed very positive opinions.

On Wednesday, 10 of March 2021 the EEAP had the following online meetings:

- i. 15.00-16.00: Tour of the facilities. The EEAP had seen in advance a video with a presentation of the Department and in this meeting, it had the opportunity to discuss further the Department's Library and facilities. After that, a discussion about the Department's facilities and University services took place.
- ii. 16.00-16.45: Programme Graduates. The EEAP had a discussion with nine Programme graduates who referred to their experience of studying at the Department and their subsequent career path. They showed a high degree of satisfaction with the Department.
- iii. 17.00-17.45: Employers and social partners. The EEAP met with representatives of a variety of social partners and employers. All expressed highly positive views about the way the Department is embedded in local society.
- iv. 19.30-20.15: Closure meeting with the Vice-Rector, the Head of Department and the OMEA and MODIP representatives. In this final meeting several points were clarified, and the EEAP provided a general view of some of the conclusions reached.

All meetings were conducted in a very constructive atmosphere. All members of the Department met by the EEAP showed a readiness to collaborate with the accreditation process and to answer all questions.

III. Study Programme Profile

The Department of Language, Literature and Culture of the Black Sea Countries (LLCBSC) was founded in 2000 and it is part of the Faculty of Classics and Humanities of the Democritus University of Thrace. Although the programme has a 20-year history, it was only in 2016 that it became an autonomous unit within the Faculty, which comprises two other departments. The objective of the department is to provide a teaching programme that covers the languages, literatures and civilisations of a very wide geographical area around the Black Sea, with a somewhat narrower linguistic focus on Russian, Romanian, Bulgarian and Turkish languages and literatures. The Department is fundamentally, constitutionally one would say, interdisciplinary, and provides education and training in a very wide range of topics. The stated objective is to train scientists who can study in detail the languages and civilisations of the countries surrounding the Black Sea but also professionals who can be productively employed in as varied areas as language teaching in State schools and the private sector, the diplomatic service, the tourist industry, translation and interpreting and more. The programme offered is a four-year standard university programme and consists of two years of general studies and then a specialisation. Of note at this point is the fact that the Department has developed a system of distribution of students across its four different linguistic specialisations. It is both proportionately fair to the general interests of the students (with a greater proportion allocated to Russian and Turkish and a smaller one to Bulgarian and Romanian) and also ensures the sustainability of all languages in the Department.

After gaining its autonomy the department has faced a variety of challenges, some associated with the particular socioeconomic climate - and thus outside the influence of the department - and others regarding the focus of the Department and programme. The EEAP was informed that the Department is currently in the process of designing and implementing some major revisions to the programme that, we hope, will bring tighter focus in the overall profile of the Department not only in teaching but also research.

The Department is unique in the country in having a focus on the whole of the Black Sea area. The Department has been extremely active in the local community and its members and students have taken part in a very wide set of activities helping local institutions (schools, the police, the border force, local associations etc.), earning it both warm acceptance in the local community as well as high esteem.

The student population, as can be expected is rather heterogeneous but a sense of belonging and identity is fostered and developed. The Department is housed in buildings that have not been seriously renovated for some time and it is to be hoped that the University authorities will take a good look at the physical situation of the Department.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

Principle 1: Academic Unit Policy for Quality Assurance

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

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

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

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

The Department has established a Quality Assurance Policy for the Undergraduate Programme that is in line with the Institutional Policy on Quality. The responsible for applying the Quality Assurance process is the Internal Evaluation Committee (OMEA) in collaboration with MODIP. In this respect, the EEAP would like to emphasize the great effort and excellent work the

institution is making to implement and improve its quality policies and to promote the quality and effectiveness of teaching.

A Department's external evaluation took place in 2014. This evaluation was followed by a reform of the Study Programme in the academic year 2015/16. The Department estimates that 70-80% of the recommendations made by the Expert Committee have been implemented.

According to institutional regulations, the Department undergoes each year an annual internal evaluation. All courses are also evaluated by students through questionnaires. The degree of student satisfaction is high (the average score obtained in the last course is 4,41 out of 5). In this respect, it is noteworthy that in recent years the number of students participating in this evaluation process has increased considerably. Moreover, according to their statements in the meeting held with the EEAP, they are satisfied with the good atmosphere of the Department and with their involvement in its activities. They also stressed that their demands and needs are usually met by the members of the Department.

In the Department, the OMEA is in charge of communicating the obtained data of all evaluation processes and they are discussed in the departmental meetings, with the active participation of students' representatives. All outcomes are properly submitted to the MODIP of the Institution. The Department's Quality Policy as well as the external evaluation report is uploaded on the Department's website. However, the internal evaluation reports, or parts thereof, are not available.

In addition to the OMEA, other Commissions have been created in all areas of Department's activity to ensure its good functioning (Study Programme, Research Mobility, Erasmus, website, internships, Handbook of Studies, Library, Connection with the Local Community, etc.)

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The Department should enhance the participation of all involved stakeholders and alumni in the Quality Assurance Policy.

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 academic profile of the Programme, the objectives, the subject areas, the structure of the curriculum and the expected learning outcomes are clearly defined by the Department and published in the Handbook of Studies and on the website of the Department.

The Study Programme was renewed in the academic year 2015-2016, maintaining its objectives to train its graduates in the languages, literature, culture and history of four of the Black Sea countries: Russia, Turkey, Bulgaria and Romania.

In its current state, the undergraduate Programme is divided into four specialisations (Russian, Turkish, Bulgarian and Romanian) and two cycles of studies. In the first cycle, the four semesters are common to all languages and the second cycle follows specialisation in subjects concerning literature and culture of each language. According to the European Credit System, each course is credited with 7 ECTS (languages courses), 5 ECTS (other mandatory courses) or 4 ECTS (elective courses) and to obtain the degree, students must take a total of 240 ECTS. The curriculum includes mandatory and elective courses, some of them of pedagogical content for the Certificate of Didactic Proficiency (Πιστοποιητικό Παιδαγωγικής και Διδακτικής Επάρκειας). The

EEAP considers that the Study Programme structure is clearly articulated, and student workload seems to be rational and adequate.

Students do not have the possibility to choose courses offered by other departments. This may be an impediment for them to deepen their knowledge further.

In the academic year 2016/17 a quota was introduced for each language (45% Russian, 25% Turkish, 15% Bulgarian and 15% Romanian). This means that in the past some language classes did not have a sufficient number of students.

Since there are no language proficiency requirements for entering the Programme, the Students have different levels of language knowledge and in some cases, it is difficult for them to reach the G2 level at the end of their studies. The Department is aware of this problem and aims on the one hand to increase the number of hours of language teaching and on the other to hire more language teachers.

Study Programme revisions take place in a specific commission in which teaching staff members of all four specialisations are represented. Its proposals are discussed and approved by the Departmental Council, with the participation of students' representatives. Until now, external stakeholders have not formally involved in the process, but recently the University endorsed the creation of a Board of Stakeholders in each department to be consulted when introducing changes in the curriculum.

The EEAP noted during the online visit the great interest of the Department in continuously revising and improving its curriculum to adapt it not only to academic and scientific requirements, but also to the demands of the labour market and the specific needs of the region in which the University is located.

Accordingly, the Programme is currently under revision and with a view to dramatically change its structure in the near future. The new Programme would strengthen language teaching and establish two directions, one of a more philological nature and the other with more emphasis on cultural aspects and modern history of the relevant countries of the Black Sea area.

At this point, the EEAP would like to emphasize the innovative and interdisciplinary character of the Department's Programme, the only one of this kind in Greece for this field of study. In this respect it is perfectly adapted to the multicultural character and history of the geographical area in which it is located. It should be stressed that the Department maintains fluid and constant relations with the local society and the external stakeholders the EEAP met during the online visit were very satisfied with their collaboration with the Department.

On the other hand, the Programme aims to respond to very different demands of the labour market and therefore offers an excessively wide range of subjects (literature and languages, but also ancient and modern history, mythology, archaeology, translation, law, international relations etc.). In this respect, the EEAP is very positive about the new programme, which will provide a more coherent course of study, establish two main directions and will allow for more in-depth philological training for those students who are more oriented towards research or education, both in the public and private sector.

Regarding linking teaching and research the Study Programme does not include seminars or courses in small groups aimed at introducing students in research, although they can participate

in conferences and other research activities organised by the Department. Students have also the option to take a BA Thesis (πτυχιακή εργασία). It would be advisable to reinforce this aspect in the future, perhaps integrating a BA Thesis with ECTS credits in the new Study Programme in the Philology specialisation, if the number of students allows for it.

Finally, to provide work experience, the Department offers the possibility to students to undertake internships outside the University.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The Department may consider introducing courses offered by other Departments.
- The Department may consider integrating a BA Thesis with ECTS credits in the new Study Programme in the Philology specialisation.

Principle 3: Student- centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment

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

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

The student-centred learning and teaching process

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

In addition :

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

Study Programme Compliance

The programme's focus consists of a rather large collection of areas and approaches, ranging from mythology to international law passing through language learning across the different languages. The teaching strategies that the Department has developed are clearly conceived with the benefit of the students in mind and both the design of the programme and the teaching that is delivered is student-centric in its core design principles and its delivery methods. Staff use a varied diet of teaching delivery methods in normal times, namely methods appropriate to the subject, i.e., lab teaching for languages as well as a series of other laboratory-based instruction such as Greek as a second language, digital literacy as well as participation in initiatives such as the recording and documentation of the Pontic dialect. Students have a

variety of learning opportunities emanating from the Department's relationships with organisations such as the "Russian World Institute" which also has an office in the Department. Further initiatives such as short and intensive language courses organised through Erasmus and other exchange programmes with colleagues from Romania, Turkey and Russia. There is wide evidence that student-centric learning is a focal aim of the department.

Practical training in both local and international settings (through Erasmus and other programmes) are available to the students and there is a wide network of local and international partners so that the different needs and inclinations of the students can be catered for.

Further evidence concerning the student-centric learning approach was provided to us by the students and graduates of the Department who stressed the close relationships developed with the members of the Department, relationships that continue long after graduation. The Department has made very commendable and successful efforts to increase the level of student participation in processes of evaluation and has now a very significant degree of participation and return of evaluation questionnaires. These questionnaires are distributed regularly and discussed at Department meetings where specific suggestions are made and agreed. Students have reported that there were significant improvements in teaching quality following the introduction and widespread use of the questionnaires. The Department should, however, reconsider the extent to which it is appropriate to discuss each professor's evaluations in such a large setting as issues of confidentiality may exist.

As already mentioned, the student-teacher relationship is both flexible and robust and seems to be working very well for the students of the department. Formal examination procedures and processes are in place and are appropriate to the subject. The examination and evaluation procedures are stated clearly in the departmental documentation and the website of the Department. We have found no evidence that the assessment criteria were applied in any other way except fairly and consistently. Assessments are designed to allow students to demonstrate the full extent of the knowledge and skills that they have acquired. There are two appeals procedures that are formally in place, one that regards marks and examination outcomes that is administered in the first instance by the Department and one that is a University-wide one called the "Student's Advocate" which deals with all other matters of concern.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The Department should continue its efforts to increase participation in student evaluations but should also consider a more private approach to the discussion of evaluation results as this can affect staff morale.
- The Department should envisage the introduction of a second assessment and/or other ways of assessment (essays, mid-terms, practicum etc.)

Principle 4: Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification
INSTITUTIONS SHOULD DEVELOP AND APPLY PUBLISHED REGULATIONS COVERING ALL ASPECTS AND PHASES OF STUDIES (ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, RECOGNITION AND CERTIFICATION).

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

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

The Department, in collaboration with the University, has developed over the years a set of clear regulations regarding student progression and more generally the student's journey through the degree programme. Incoming students are welcomed and guided in the settling in period. Helped by advisors they are eased into the academic community that will be their home for four years. All relevant procedures are those decided by the Department and approved by the University's quality assurance committee. Students are clearly aware of the processes. The Department applies ECTS across its modules.

Recognition procedures are fully aligned with accepted good practice.

Furthermore, the Department has put in place committees for the specific orientations that the students may choose as well as for the pre-specialisation phase which consider issues of the student progression and organisation of the curriculum.

The Department has practical training in place, and this is a particularly highly praised aspect of the course of studies, especially by students, both current and those who have graduated. The Department is particularly well embedded in the local community and this is extremely valuable in the development of a local network providing as wide a set of opportunities as is possible in a city of this size (Although students do have opportunities for practical training abroad). A diploma supplement is also provided to students who qualify for the relevant requirements as language teachers.

Students have the opportunity to work on a BA Thesis and the EEAP saw evidence of excellent work in the area. The thesis is not a compulsory part of the programme of studies but those students who chose to do one are very well supported by staff who are enthusiastic about the topic.

Interviewed students said that they felt very well integrated in the academic life of the Department, being even invited to participate in research activities from a very early stage.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The Department should explore ways to widen the routes through which the diploma supplement can be gained (i.e., not necessarily as a stepping stone to language teaching).

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 hires academic staff applying the criteria and the procedures set by the Greek legislation for state Universities. Elections and appointments are not made on a regular basis but depend on the response, positive or not, of the central authorities of the University and of the Ministry of Education to the suggestions of the Department. The recruitment of permanent academic staff (μέλη ΔΕΠ) being rather slow and complicated, the Department has set as a priority to hire auxiliary staff (EDIP/EEP) who would cover the pressing needs of teaching the four languages of the Study Programme. Committees consisting of internal and external members take up the responsibility of such recruitments.

Opportunities for the professional development of the teaching staff:

The Department has set various opportunities of professional development to the staff, e.g. (i) through organising international conferences held in Komotini and the adjacent area; (ii) supporting their mobility within the framework of Erasmus exchanges after agreements made with Universities of six foreign countries; (iii) possibility of publishing peer-reviewed articles in the Department's on-line periodical (Mare Ponticum); (iv) participation in research projects of the University and/or other academic institutions of Greece, yet only a limited part of the staff can embrace this opportunity. There is no provision for regularly financing research-related travelling or participation in conferences abroad.

Link between teaching and research:

As a rule, the teaching staff offers courses directly related to their research expertise. Exceptionally, some members of the staff offer courses beyond this expertise. Moreover, the

location of the Department in Thrace has given the opportunity to its academics to enlarge their scholarly interests by focusing on regional research.

Use of technologies in teaching

The relevant infrastructure in the Department appears adequate, and staff is encouraged to use new technologies in their courses. In the current content of the pandemic, staff is very active in developing online teaching materials.

Increase of the volume and quality of the research output:

The spread of the scholarly interests of the academic staff in a broad range of areas makes it difficult to provide a general assessment. Generally speaking, most academics can demonstrate a publishing record, be it monographs and articles on the study of the language they teach or otherwise.

Attracting highly qualified staff:

The Department's priority is to hire academics at the level of Assistant Professor. Admittedly, the fact that the languages and literatures taught at the Department do not correspond to fields much cultivated in the Greek Academia makes any selection of candidates very limited. This does not suggest that the endeavour of hiring first-rank academics should be compromised.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Increase the financial support for staff's professional development.
- Enhance the staff's research output and profile.
- Broaden as much as possible the pool of candidates for permanent positions.

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's location in Komotini's city centre in the former building of the University's Law School has been regarded as an advantage by students who thus avoid daily transportation to the campus and can be more communicative with local life and society. Apart from classrooms, the same building houses the library of the Department, laboratories, and the offices of the teaching staff, a feature that favours concentration and communication between students and their teachers on a daily basis.

Seen against the wide range of languages and literatures taught at the Department, the limited space so far allotted to the library as well as its poor book resources point to a need for drastic measures to be taken for its implementation. It is hoped that with bringing together the libraries of the School of Classics and Humanities into a campus new building this problem will be sorted out. It is also hoped that the new library will be implemented with study rooms and all relevant facilities.

Both the Department and the University institutionally provide counselling services to students, be they freshers or at an advanced year of study. Several offices have been established to offer not only psychological and social support to the students but also feedback on their written assignments with a view of improving their linguistic and grammatical skills.

No meeting was arranged with the administrative staff. In line with the sentiments of the teaching staff, interviewed students expressed their satisfaction about the efficiency of the Secretariat in very strong terms.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Supply the academic unit with adequate funding to cover teaching and learning needs.
- Enrich the departmental library with new acquisitions.

Principle 7: Information Management

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

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

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

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

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

The Department, in collaboration with MODIP, has established adequate mechanisms for the collection of data and indicators regarding student population profile, student progression, success and drop-out rates and student satisfaction with the Study Programme. Student satisfaction questionnaires are regularly conducted and the OMEA analyses and communicates the information obtained (see Principle 1). Data collected are properly presented in graphs, demonstrating trends and allowing direct interpretation and comparisons.

However, the Department has not yet developed mechanisms to gather systematically data on employability of its graduates and information about the opinion and demands of external stakeholders. It is in the process of creating a network of Alumni aiming to obtain information on their satisfaction with the Study Programme and on their career paths. The EEAP welcomes this initiative and encourages the Department to expand it in the future.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The Department should expand its relationship with alumni and to collect more data on their professional career.

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 uploads on its website information about its activities, including the teaching staff's CVs, the programmes, description of the offered courses, details about the Erasmus exchange programme, facilities for the students, editions, and the e-journal Mare Ponticum. In general, the EEAP was satisfied from inspecting the online material and the information it provides, as it considers it up-to-date and readily accessible to both internal and external users. Some omissions observed in the CVs of members of the teaching staff and in the English version of the website can hardly affect the overall positive impression of the EEAP on this point.

The EEAP was also pleased to confirm the Department's extroverted activity and its engagement with the local society.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The Department should envisage translating parts of its website material into the languages taught in its curriculum.

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

As stated above, the Department has established a Quality Assurance Policy for the Undergraduate Programme that is in line with the Institutional Policy on Quality.

Taking into consideration the information included in the Accreditation Proposal, the Handbook of Studies, a PP presentation entitled “Παρουσίαση ΟΜΕΑ ΤΓΦΠΠΧ”, as well as other relevant material provided, the Department has implemented: a) a biannual monitoring of teaching and b) the external assessment in December 2014 by HAHE in accordance with the Law 3374/2005.

A departmental Committee was also entrusted with the mission to revise the programme in accordance with the guidelines provided by the Accreditation Report of 2014. The revised programmes will be submitted to the competent authorities, aim at fulfilling the needs of the local society and enhance the careers of the graduates (see above Principle 2).

The EEAP is overall satisfied with the proposed revisions of the programme and the concern of the Department to involve actively the local societies and to study its past, present and future.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The Department should be cautious in the revision of the programme to be undertaken in order to offer a more coherent curriculum, both in the historical periods covered and fields taught.

Principle 10: Regular External Evaluation of Undergraduate Programmes
PROGRAMMES SHOULD REGULARLY UNDERGO EVALUATION BY COMMITTEES OF EXTERNAL EXPERTS SET BY HAHE, AIMING AT ACCREDITATION. THE TERM OF VALIDITY OF THE ACCREDITATION IS DETERMINED BY HAHE.

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

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

The EEAP noticed with satisfaction the Department's commitment towards the implementation of the guidelines provided in the previous external evaluation (2014) towards all the recommendations made in therein.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

None.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

- A commitment to the continuous improvement of the programme and the Department more generally through setting clear goals in collaboration with the University's relevant authorities (MODIP).
- Commitment to follow the Quality Assurances Policy and to improve the quality of teaching.
- The cultivation of close relationships with the local community where the Department played a role not only in providing training and students carrying out valuable internships but also has helped raise cultural awareness in the community and has served as a bridge between communities.
- Research on the Black Sea countries and especially the Greek presence as well as Greek dialects of the area and other local linguistic varieties provide valuable insights in the history and civilisation of the area.
- Building of a closely knit academic community between staff and students.
- Although students entering the Department do so with rather low grades the programme provides them with significant value added as they graduate. This represents serious effort and is highly commendable.
- Great interest in the organisation of conferences, seminars, summer schools, etc.
- Publication of an open access journal on a regular basis.

II. Areas of Weakness

- The programme is too diffuse and can be perceived as lacking in focus. A more careful planning process for the future whereby the areas of focus will be better delineated will be needed.
- Low level of students entering the first year (But see point 6 above).
- Heterogeneous levels of knowledge of the languages taught and difficulty in reaching the G2 level.
- Insufficient financial support for staff's research activities.
- Evaluation of students chiefly on the basis of final exams.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- Establish a more reasonable ratio between staff and students.
- Enhance the research output of the teaching staff and its visibility.
- Various support staff's professional development.
- Adopt a system of student evaluation on a more distributed manner across the semester (e.g., mid-term exams, essays) more widely.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

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

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **5 and 6.**

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

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

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

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname

Signature

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2. Assoc. Professor Alicia MORALES ORTIZ

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