



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

Accreditation Report for the New Undergraduate Study Programme in Operation of:

**Agricultural Development, Agrofood, and Management of Natural
Resources**

**Institution: National and Kapodistrian University of Athens
Date: 24 June 2023**



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 of **Agricultural Development, Agrofood and Management of Natural Resources** of the **National and Kapodistrian University of Athens** for the purposes of granting accreditation.

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PART A: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW

I. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the new undergraduate study programme in operation of **Agricultural Development, Agrofood, and Management of Natural Resources** of the **National and Kapodistrian University of Athens** comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

- 1. Professor Emeritus, Spyros Pavlostathis (Chair)**
Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, Georgia, USA

- 2. Professor, Constantin Vamvakas**
f. Academic Counselor, University of Ghent, Ghent, Belgium

- 3. Associate Professor, Vasileios Fotopoulos**
Cyprus University of Technology, Limassol, Cyprus

- 4. Mr. Spyridon Rizos**
Member of the Geotechnical Chamber of Greece, Athens, Greece

- 5. Mrs. Aphrodite Lioliou**
Student, Department of Agriculture, International Hellenic University, Thessaloniki, Greece

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

In preparation for the visit, the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel (EEAP) reviewed multitude of material provided by the Hellenic Authority of Higher Education (HAHE), which included background information and guidance on the accreditation process, detailed material and data related to the programme under evaluation, such as the programme accreditation proposal and associated appendices.

The programme review was conducted via teleconference (Zoom), organized and coordinated by HAHE with the help of the Department of Agricultural Development, Agrofood and Management of Natural Resources, National and Kapodistrian University of Athens. The schedule and agenda of the review were as stated below:

Monday, 19/06/2023:

- a) Preliminary private meeting of the EEAP; assignment of writing parts of the accreditation report draft to the members of the EEAP.
- b) Welcome meeting and short overview of the undergraduate programme (UP) with the vice-Rector/President of MODIP Prof. D. Karadimas and the Head of the Department Prof. Th. Zahariadis: presentation of Department history, academic profile, current status and future developments, strengths and areas of concern.
- c) Meeting with OMEA members Profs. M. Koukou, N. Afratis, and Mrs. S. Ntikou, as well as with MODIP members Mr. K. Bourletidis, Mr. Th. Chajitheodorou, and Mrs. A. Nippi: discussion of degree compliance of the UP to the quality standards for accreditation, internal procedures, course examinations, review of students' progress, and course/instructor evaluations.
- d) Private debriefing (EEAP members only).

Tuesday, 20/06/2023:

- a) Discussion with faculty M. Vrachopoulos, A. Baldoukas, N. Orfanoudakis, V. Stathopoulos, O. Arvaniti, A. Vatsanidou, I. Doukas, N. Papageorgiou, A. Terpou, and M. Tsakas.
- b) Discussion with eight (8) 1st to 4th academic year undergraduate students.
- c) On-line (video) and walk-through, live tour: discussion of Department facilities, such as classrooms, laboratories, faculty and staff offices, secretariat, as well as University library and other campus facilities. Participating faculty and staff: Th. Zahariadis, M. Vrachopoulos, A. Baldoukas, N. Orfanoudakis, O. Arvaniti, A. Vatsanidou, I. Doukas, N. Papageorgiou, A. Terpou, M. Tsakas, and Mrs. S. Ntikou, Secretary.
- d) Discussion with employers and social partners from both private and public sector: Mr. G. Pspathas, Mayor of Dirfies Messapies; Mrs. R. Kechri, Advisor to Sterea Ellada Governor; Dr. K. Koliass, President of the Economic Chamber of Greece; Dr. G. Varras, former Advisor on Agricultural Development to Prime Minister K. Mitsotakis, former president of OPEKEPE; Mr. P. Chatzinikolaou, General Director of ELGO DIMITRA; Dr. G. Stratakos, former General Secretary of Ministry of Rural Development and Food, General Director of IKORGANIC S.A.; Dr. Th. Bartzanas, Vice Rector of Agricultural University of Athens, Chair of Board of Directors SmartAgroHub S.A.; Mrs. E. Mitala,

ASCADA Farm S.A.; and Mrs. M. Kanaki, External Special Advisor Panhellenic Association of Young Farmers (PENA).

- e) Private debriefing (EEAP members only): discussion of findings and preparation of oral report.
- f) Discussion with OMEA and MODIP members and staff on points needing clarification relative to Internal Quality Assurance System and procedures followed by the Institution and the Department. Participating faculty OMEA members: Profs. M. Koukou, N. Afratis, and Mrs. S. Ntikou. Participating MODIP members: Mr. K. Bourletidis, Mr. Th. Chajitheodorou, and Mrs. A. Nippi.
Final, closure meeting with the Head of the Department, Prof. Th. Zahariadis, OMEA, and MODIP members and staff: informal presentation of the EEAP key findings.
- g) Private debriefing (EEAP members only): discussion of findings and coordination of writing the accreditation report draft.

Wednesday, 21/06/2023:

Private EEAP members meeting. Draft report writing.

Thursday, 22/06/2023:

Draft report writing.

Friday, 23/06/2023:

Draft report writing.

Saturday, 24/06/2023:

EEAP meeting: Review and finalization of report draft.

Throughout the review and evaluation process, the EEAP was in close communication with the Head of the Department, who was very accommodating in providing additional information requested by the EEAP. The EEAP found that OMEA and MODIP representatives, as well as the faculty, students, and staff interviewed were eager and helpful in our discussions, providing all additional information requested by the EEAP.

III. New Undergraduate Study Programme in operation Profile

The Evripou complex of the National and Kapodistrian University of Athens, located in Psachna, Prefecture of Evia, was created by Law 4589/January 29, 2019. The School of Rural Development, Nutrition and Sustainability was established by the same law, under which the Department of Agricultural Development, Agri-Food and Management of Natural Resources was also established. Admission of the first students, started at the beginning of the academic year 2019-2020. The Department has 17 faculty, plus one to be added soon, 6 PhD candidate students/researchers, 7 non-tenure track teaching staff (Law 407), and 3 administrative staff.

The number of admitted students per academic year set by the department is 60 (2019, 2020) and 80 (2021, 2022). However, the number of newly admitted students in 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022 was 104, 105, 85, and 83, respectively. Several of the students the EEAP interviewed stated that the Department of Rural Development, Agri-Food and Management of Natural Resources was among the first to fourth choice.

The undergraduate programme is a four-year study resulting in a BS degree. The curriculum includes eight (8) semesters of study. To graduate, the student must have successfully passed courses totalling 220 European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credits and have prepared and completed a thesis (20 ECTS). The total number of credits must be at least equal to 240 ECTS. The minimum coursework credits are distributed as follows: 126 ECTS for compulsory courses, 30 ECTS for selected compulsory courses, 64 ECTS for elective courses. Practical training is optional for 6 ECTS. For graduates of the Department who have successfully taken a set of specific courses from a designated list, a Certificate of Digital Skills may be granted. A large number of elective courses are available. The EEAP found that the curriculum is extensive but needs to be restructured into well-defined tracks such as Agricultural Development, Agrofood, and Management of Natural Resources in order to provide better guidance to the students in their selection of courses.

The Department prepares graduates for careers in both the private and public sector of the economy. There are strong links to the society, Industry, and administration, both in the Region of Sterea Ellada and beyond, which are key priority of the Department.

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

NOTE: In commenting on the programme compliance relative to the various elements of Principle 1 (i.e., elements *a* through *g*), and to avoid repetitions, when applicable, reference to comments in individual Principles (i.e., Principle 2 through 12) is made.

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

The Department of Agricultural Development, Agri-Food and Management of Natural Resources, as part of the Evripou complex, was established in January 2019 (Law 4589/January 29, 2019) by the transfer of faculty and staff members of the Technological Educational Institute of Chalkida to the new Department. The mission of the Department is to cultivate and promote the science of Agricultural Development and Food Technologies, emphasizing not only knowledge and expertise in new technological developments in the primary sector, sustainability, climate change and the preservation of biodiversity, but also imparting knowledge of the secondary and tertiary sectors such as in the fields of manufacturing, IT and of the economic and sustainable business development in rural areas. The scientific field of the Department is included in the internationally established scientific fields of Higher Education designated by UNESCO (International Standard Classification of Education – Fields of Education and Training 2013; ISCED-F 2013)(Thematic section "08. Agriculture, Forestry, Fisheries and Veterinary"; it also extends to other thematic sections such as "05. Natural Sciences, Mathematics and Statistics" and "0413 Management and administration" (See also Principles 2, 3).

b. The strategy of the Institution for its academic development

The strategy of the operation of the Department as well the development of the study programme is fully harmonized with the strategy of the Institution. The design of the programme study took into account the national and international experience as well as societal and research needs related to the broader area of Agricultural Development, Sustainability and Management of Natural Resources, leading to a very interdisciplinary curriculum, as well as the advancement of research related to the fields of study. Curricula of similar programmes in Greece and abroad were examined. For the development of the programme study, institutional, economic, developmental, as well as societal factors were considered. A SWOT analysis was conducted (See also Principles 2, 3).

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

As mentioned in section ***b. The strategy of the Institution for its academic development***, above, institutional, economic, developmental, as well as societal factors were considered for the development of the Department and its programme study. In particular, the supply and demand of graduates in the Department's fields of study, individuals with broad, interdisciplinary knowledge and expertise who could be employed in the private and public sectors were taken into account, justifying the development of the new Department. The development and operation of the Department is consistent with and supportive of the Sterea Ellada Region development vision and expertise needed. Relative to other similar programmes, the new Department is differentiated by its extensive, interdisciplinary approach related to agrobusiness, in particular small to medium size ones. However, the curriculum needs to be restructured into well-defined tracks such as Agricultural Development, Agrofood, and Management of Natural Resources in order to provide better guidance to the students in their selection of courses. In addition, the Evripou complex is in close proximity to a heavily agricultural area which supplies food to the broader area of Athens and suburbs. The

Department proximity to a multitude of agroindustries offers lots of opportunities to the students for educational visits as well as for hands-on, realistic internships (See also Principles 2, 3, 5).

d. The documentation of the sustainability of the new department

The general needs of infrastructure and support of the students are covered by the Department and the Evripou complex. The Department has eighteen (18) classrooms, two (2) auditoria/amphitheatres, and has access to other facilities in the Evripou complex such as PC/Informatics. The Department has five (5) laboratories, with two more anticipated in the near future. The laboratories and the laboratory equipment are sufficient and adequate for the instructional needs of the students and research projects. The Department has 17 faculty, plus one to be added soon, 6 PhD candidate students/researchers, 7 non-tenure track teaching staff (Law 407), and 3 administrative staff. Filling of future faculty positions resulting from retirement as well as new positions in academic/research areas more closely related to the fields of the Department have been identified. Faculty members carry externally funded research projects with funding secured from competitive national and international sources as well as industrial foundations and industry (See also Principles 6, 7, 8).

e. The structure of studies

The undergraduate programme is a four-year study resulting in a BS degree. The curriculum includes eight (8) semesters of study. To graduate, the student must have successfully passed courses totalling 220 European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credits and have prepared and completed a thesis (20 ECTS). The total number of credits must be at least equal to 240 ECTS. The minimum coursework credits are distributed as follows: 126 ECTS for compulsory courses, 30 ECTS for selected compulsory courses, 64 ECTS for elective courses. Practical training is optional for 6 ECTS. For graduates of the Department who have successfully taken a set of specific courses from a designated list, a Certificate of Digital Skills may be granted. A large number of elective courses are available. The EEAP found that the curriculum is extensive, but needs to be restructured into well-defined tracks such as Agricultural Development, Agrofood, and Management of Natural Resources in order to provide better guidance to the students in their selection of courses. The Curriculum is based on learning outcomes specified in each course syllabus, the quality of teaching and research, as well as the use and integration of technology to improve teaching-learning processes. A number of published internal regulations exist for all aspects of course and laboratory delivery, examination, and grading, laboratory exercises, preparation of diploma thesis, etc. Modes of teaching include theory, practice exercises, laboratory exercises, homework, and individual or group study assignments. The students' performance and grading are a combination of end of semester examination and other assignments as mentioned above. Practical training is not required, but students can choose to embark in such activity. As mentioned in section **a**, above, the mission of the Department is to cultivate and promote the science of Agricultural Development and Food Technologies, emphasizing not only knowledge and expertise in new technological developments in the primary sector, sustainability, climate change and the preservation of biodiversity, but also imparting knowledge of the secondary and tertiary sectors such as in the fields of manufacturing, IT and of the economic and sustainable business development in rural areas. To a large extent the Department fulfils its role in imparting knowledge and skills to its graduates consistent with its mission (See also Principles 3, 6, 7).

f. The number of admitted students

The undergraduate programme is a four-year study resulting in a BS degree. The number of admitted students per academic year set by the department is 60 (2019, 2020) and 80 (2021, 2022). However, the number of newly admitted students in 2019, 2020, 2021, and 2022 was 104, 105, 85, and 83, respectively. Several of the students the EEAP interviewed stated that the Department of Rural Development, Agri-Food and Management of Natural Resources was among the first to fourth choice. Student transfers from/to similar departments of other Greek Higher Education Institutes are not possible. For the first time, in the academic year 2023-2024, students will be admitted through entrance examinations administered by the Department (See also Principle 5).

g. Postgraduate studies and research

The Department is preparing to offer/participate in three postgraduate study programs: a) Agriculture and Sustainability; b) Energy Audits in Buildings, Industrial and Agricultural Holdings (jointly with the Department of Physics, EKPA); and c) Rural Development & Intelligent Agriculture (jointly with the Department of Agriculture, University of Ioannina). The Department supports doctoral studies by itself and/or in collaboration with other Greek Universities. The faculty carry research projects of national and international scope/needs based on the laboratory facilities and resources of the Department as well as in collaboration with other Universities and Research Centres. It is commendable that the Department has developed a large number of collaborative research programs. Overall, the research output of the Department should and is expected to increase (See also Principle 6).

Panel Judgement

Principle 1: Strategic planning, feasibility and sustainability of the academic unit	
a. The academic profile and the mission of the academic unit	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
b. The strategy of the Institution for its academic development	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
c. The documentation of the feasibility of the operation of the department and the study programme	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
d. The documentation of the sustainability of the new department	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
e. The structure of studies	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
f. The number of admitted students	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
g. Postgraduate studies	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

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

Panel Recommendations

To avoid repetitions, where appropriate, specific recommendations are made for the remaining Principles that follow.

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

According to the data presented to the EEAP, the Institution has developed and implements their Quality Assurance Policy as part of its broader strategy. The past three years the University has applied this policy at the new undergraduate curriculum of the Department of Rural Development, Agri-Food and Management of Natural Resources, accompanied by annual quality assurance targets for the continuous development and improvement of the academic unit and teaching programme. The Quality Assurance Policy of the academic unit, which is publicly accessible from the Department website (<https://agro.uoa.gr/en/politiki-diasfalisis-poiotitas/>) includes adequate reference to the delivery of the new undergraduate programme, including commitments to satisfy requirements and strive for continuous improvement. There are explicitly recorded in the four-year Business Plan of the academic unit

and also in the Programme of Study. The Quality Assurance Policy is sufficiently communicated to all parties involved as it is publicly available in the Departmental webpage. The academic unit has set specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and timely goals regarding the new undergraduate programme, and according to their Quality Target for the Programme they are at a satisfactory point in terms of achieving the required targets. Based on the data presented to the EEAP, the targets are also paired with suitable key performance indicators (KPIs). Goals are monitored, updated, and communicated, according to the Quality Assurance Policy implemented by the Institution and the academic unit. On the average, 18,5% of the active students participate in course/instructor evaluation, which is considered very low, but not unusual for Greek Higher Education Institutes.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

To enhance adherence to Principle 2, the Panel recommends the following:

- A student representative should be included in the OMEA to directly connect with the student population relative to the evaluation and accreditation process.
- The Department should make an effort to substantially increase student participation in course/instructor evaluations.
- Establishment of an External Advisory Board should be considered which will guide the continuous revision and further development of the curriculum.
- Interactions with alumni upon their graduation should be exploited as a potential means of informing the decision-making process regarding future directions.

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

The study program at the Department of Agricultural Development, Agrofood and Management of Natural Resources is 8 semesters (4 years - National and European

Qualifications Framework: 6), requiring a minimum of 240 ECTS. The curriculum is organized into two groups of courses. A group of 29 courses (22 mandatory and 7 elective mandatory courses) offering a total of at least 156 ECTS, and a group of at least 16 elective courses offering a minimum of 64 ECTS. The curriculum also includes the preparation of a thesis offering 20 credit points. Based on the data received, 65% of the total ECTS account for mandatory courses, and 27% are attained through electives. According to the course outlines, there are no prerequisite courses. The strengths of the Department lie in the large spectrum of fields covered, as well as the links between research and teaching, and the students' thesis. Also, the Undergraduate Programme of Studies includes courses for the acquisition of digital skills. Weak points of the curriculum can be considered the following: The curriculum contains a wide range of courses in many areas of the primary sector resulting in little specialization in specific areas. There are no mandatory courses on natural resources (water, soil). Also, the Undergraduate Programme of Studies does not include mandatory practical training; English terminology course is not mandatory. Nevertheless, the EAAP considers that the course should be mandatory due to the research needs/bibliographical sources. The Department should regularly update course content and objectives to provide additional learning and critical analysis skills. The course syllabi included the required learning outcomes.

Students actively participate in the pedagogical process through laboratory and hands-on exercises in most courses.

The high number of admitted students in the first two years of the program (~100) could curtail the student progress potential and, indirectly, the quality of the study program. EEAP foresees that the number of admitted students may result in an unsustainable faculty/student ratio affecting the timeline at which students can complete their theses. However, this ratio has already improved in the following years (around 85 students/year) and is expected to improve further in the future with the recruitment of additional teaching staff.

Although the Undergraduate Programme of Studies is still in its infancy, EEAP notes that the Department maintains a monitoring committee and an Advisory Board, which in collaboration with other authorities, can oversee the implementation, progress, and future needs of the program.

Stakeholders were very positive when it came to undergraduate knowledge and abilities. They all commented on the dedication of faculty and staff and their success. They attested that graduates meet the expectations of the market in the public and private sectors.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The Undergraduate Programme should offer direct, quantitative comparisons with similar programmes of study to meet self-imposed requirements for excellence it has set itself its reputation and status. The programme will benefit from new faculty members requested until 2027.
- It is recommended that the Practical Training of students should become mandatory and be evaluated with 10 ECTS.
- The course in English terminology should become mandatory.
- Define/name prerequisites courses for elective courses.
- Courses in natural resources (water, soil) should become mandatory.
- The number of incoming students should be stabilised at current admission levels (~85).
- Key stakeholders and external partners, along with an External Advisory Board, should be consulted on future changes to the Undergraduate Programme of studies.

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

The committee concluded that a student-centered approach is largely adopted in terms of teaching. The curriculum respects students' diversity and their individual needs and, given the availability of electives and a variety of pedagogical means, it is possible to pursue flexible learning paths.

Students are encouraged to develop individual skills, such as digital skills which are credited to them through the form of a certificate after successful completion of a number of specific courses. However, there is no direct evidence that the students are seen as active partners in the teaching/learning process, apart from the fact that they participate in (voluntary) evaluation of the courses and Faculty taking place on the 8th week of each semester. However, it should be noted that the number of participants appears to be dropping, particularly in early semesters (1st-3rd) and this is not assisted by the voluntary nature of participation.

Assessment criteria and methods are published in advance and there is full transparency of all relevant points as they are included in the course outlines on the webpage. One point that raises slight concern is related to the cases of students failing a course for 3 consecutive times, in which case they can undergo a custom exam (written or oral) supervised by three Faculty relevant to the course and excluding the faculty in charge of the course. This could potentially be problematic, considering the low number of Faculty members (15) which might not satisfy

the minimum number of three examiners that should be relevant to the subject under examination.

There is a formal regulation that outlines the role and responsibilities of the academic advisor, while this function appears to be effectively applied with students praising the role of their advisors and willingness to assist during the interview carried out between them and the EEAP.

A formal procedure for student complaints and appeals running centrally (NKUA) is in place, as shown in the Department website.

Practical exercise is not compulsory to students (it is a selection course). This should be re-assessed, due to the nature of the academic program.

There is a Liaison/Counselling Office that provides specialized counseling support for students with physical or learning disabilities. The teaching staff are also obliged to offer alternative oral or combined oral/written and/or supplementary oral examination for such cases.

There is no on-site facility/service for psychological support, although it is possible for students to arrange for an appointment with specialists that will be assigned centrally from NKUA. However, urgent matters cannot be handled by default like this.

Foreign students with difficulties in the Greek language are not supported by a Foreign Languages Office on site, although some support is provided through the assistance of the Department's secretaries who are fluent in English.

Students are not formally represented in the General Faculty Assembly of the Department to express their concerns and vision for the programme.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- On-site language support by specialized personnel should be encouraged to enhance mobility of international students (e.g., Erasmus+ program) while promoting outreach and internationalization.
- The number of courses offered in English, should be increased, particularly in view of the University's involvement in CIVIS.
- The completion of the electronic questionnaire should be a prerequisite for participation to exams.
- The EAAP recommends that practical training course should be re-assessed in becoming compulsory, considering the nature of the academic program and the desire to bring students close to the industry.

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

Students are admitted to the Department via the National Exams system. The Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs determines the number of students admitted. Every year, there are 80-85 students admitted.

The curriculum is compatible with the European and international practices and its objectives are linked with the labor market. The curriculum is structured based on the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS). However, a point of concern is the ECTS units credited to each course, as 22 of the courses are awarded ≥ 6 ECTS units which is quite high, especially considering that these courses do not include laboratory practicals and usually are based on 4 hours of theory.

The Department has created practices for students' progression and recognition of credits among various European Academic Institutions according to the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

In addition to ample information material online for incoming students, the Department annually organizes special welcoming and orientation on-site sessions for incoming students, with the sole exception of the season 2020-2021 which was omitted due to COVID-19.

Students can participate in study abroad programs such as Erasmus+; however, no such data on incoming/outgoing students were presented (with the exception of two members of staff), which could however be the result of the young age of the Department (but also poor information campaigns).

Students do voluntary/elective practical training after the 6th semester that takes place in the summer months of July-August. Successful completion is not a prerequisite for obtaining a degree. Furthermore, practical training can occur in private or public sectors and is financially supported in certain cases.

The Diploma Supplement is issued automatically upon graduation both in Greek and English.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The curriculum must be strictly harmonized with the regulation as far as the ECTS policy is concerned.
- It must be ensured that students have adequate support during their practical training, particularly considering the focus of the academic program and the sought-after liaison with the industry. This could be achieved by expanding it to split in two years or as a full semester, or by even combining it with a study abroad program (which could take place through CIVIS for example).
- The incoming student mobility (Erasmus+) should be promoted further, and more courses should ideally be offered in English for incoming exchanged students.

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

Election of new Faculty is based on national laws (4957/2022) and takes place through the national platforms APELA and DIAVGIA.

The Department offers opportunities for professional development to all Faculty members. They are expected to be active in research and are offered startup funding for basic equipment upon election, along with annual funding to travel to conferences to present their work and network.

The number and specialties of the teaching staff are borderline adequate to cover the curriculum, and currently this is in cases achieved by assigning courses to Faculty that are not necessarily close to their expertise. Therefore, future elections of academic staff should ensure the smooth implementation of the curriculum.

A mechanism exists for the systematic handling and documentation of repeated, low-score student evaluations of individual faculty instructors with proposed corrective measures.

The Department has attracted highly qualified Faculty members. This is evident by the satisfactory volume and quality of the academic research publications of the Faculty (average of 2 papers per Faculty per annum) but also by their teaching dedication as shown by the students' evaluation of their teaching.

Tenure-track faculty average teaching load is very near the threshold of 6 h per semester that is set by law (i.e., 6.2 h).

The EEAP is not aware if there are elective courses that are not offered because of low enrollment.

The EEAP is not aware of any sabbaticals taken place at the Department from other Universities/Research Units. However, this is not surprising for the time being due to the short life of the Department so far.

The EEAP is not aware of any apparent mechanisms for rewarding excellence in teaching.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Considering the constraints in recruiting new , the Department should recruit individuals who can ideally serve in more than one research/teaching area.
- It might be useful to adopt a policy of promoting and rewarding excellence in teaching across all personnel (e.g., “Lecturer of the Year”), based on the student questionnaires and other related achievements and activities of the teaching staff.
- The Department should develop strategies for attracting international lecturers/researchers for short, medium, and long-term visits (i.e., sabbaticals).

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

The EEAP noted the good quality of an adequate number of facilities dedicated to supporting the study programme and its students. The educational and scientific equipment of all classrooms, laboratories and the two auditoriums (with a capacity of 293 and 70 seats each) is of good variety and quality, adequate for teaching and research including, video projectors, overhead projectors, display screens and PCs. There is the commitment of the Management to enrich this equipment in the near future towards a more student-centered mode process. Auxiliary facilities (i.e., Department's website, IT Systems and learning platforms, library, etc.) are also available and accessible to students when needed. Students are well informed of the different support services available and confidently expressed that they have good access to them. The Department has established and already operates an information system for the management and monitoring of data concerning faculty, course structure and organization, students, course materials, teaching, and provision of services to students as well as to the academic community.

The Department comprises four buildings (A, B, C and D). The Department's lecture halls and the laboratories in these buildings have a clear signage to facilitate their students.

The Department shares the use of the library of the Evripou complex. The library provides access to various databases, as well as electronic access to publications, books, and academic journals. These facilities seem to fit the needs of the programme and the availability of such databases is essential for carrying out academic research and publishing in peer-reviewed journals.

There is a significant variety of student support facilities available for the students, which are: ERASMUS & CIVIS mobility programmes, counselling services, medical support, awards and scholarships, support of students with disabilities by a dedicated office, management of complaints, sport facilities (two basket and one tennis courts) one restaurant and one cafe. Additionally, more services are available in the EKPA University campus in Athens (foreign languages learning, students' cultural club among others).

There are also seven dedicated research laboratories and seven IT laboratories for student's use and for teaching IT related subjects. Facilities seem to fit the needs of the Department. More specifically, the following Research Laboratories are hosted in the above-mentioned laboratories to keep the students engaged within the academic community of a regional University: Laboratory of Physical & Chemical Measurements; Laboratory of Food Analysis; Laboratory of Biotechnology and Molecular Analysis; Laboratory of Water & Soil Quality Control; Computer Laboratories; Energy and Environmental Research Laboratory (E2ReLab); Laboratory of Chemistry & Materials Technology.

There is Student Advisor Support service for the students to seek advice on their study program as well for the resolution of possible personal problems. In general, all students interviewed by the EEAP indicated that the relationship with and accessibility with the support facilities and their professors is very good and friendly.

Information and material for all thematic units are uploaded on the electronic learning platform (e-class), which contains useful learning material including lecture notes, articles, and other useful sources of information pertinent to the programme. This also provides a useful platform for communication between students and faculty. The students indicated that they are pleased with the support and accessibility they enjoy.

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.

The Department has organized the management of future data collection about the career progression of graduates. The first 12% of alumni is estimated to have graduated by the end of 2023.

In conclusion, the available resources and student support of the undergraduate programme meet the expectations of the EEAP.

During the virtual tour and the discussions with faculty, teaching staff, and students, as well as the video prepared, it was revealed that laboratories satisfactorily cover the learning needs. Near-future investments will expand the learning experience and advance the services.

The Department administrative staff appears to be well equipped and organized in order to offer support to students and staff in an efficient manner.

The EEAP observed a lack of emergency response procedures/training and emergency drill for the buildings where the Department is placed. It should be noted, though, that the laboratories have put in place procedures for laboratory safety as well as the risk and appropriate disposal of materials/residuals.

Overall, the students are informed about the availability of services through the website and/or directly by the teaching and professional services staff.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The Department, working closely with the University authorities, should ensure the students' access to psychological assistance and counselling at the Evripou complex.
- The Department should implement an emergency response procedure and frequent emergency drills
- The Department should consider the enhancement of extracurricular activities wherever possible.

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

The departmental statistics reside on information management systems involved in the gathering, analyzing, and utilizing data and information relative to the Undergraduate Program of Study, including:

- The University wide-based MODIP system
- The Departmental information management system

The above-described information network is utilized to serve the academic and administrative needs of the Department as well as to be used for Program Quality Assurance and Quality Improvement, for which the Departmental Unit for Quality Assurance (OMEA) and the University Unit for Quality Assurance (MODIP) are responsible. OMEA, the internal evaluation group, analyzes the student data and uses this information to improve the performance of students and all teaching personnel. OMEA gathers and inputs data and information in the departmental information system on an ongoing basis about a variety of categories relevant to the Program of Study, such as:

- The instructional and research activities of the faculty members
- The departmental teaching support facilities
- Data on course evaluations by the students
- Student profiles
- MOUs signed with regional stakeholders
- Statistical data and indicators for funding
- Statistical data on the scientific work (published scientific work, excellence, etc.)

- Statistical data on the students' mobility

Easy access to the departmental system is provided to the faculty, students, and staff, all of whom are involved in the submission of data, which eventually is quantified in the form of KPIs that can be easily interpreted and used for measurement and assessment purposes. The procedures used to collect and analyze the relevant data are being implemented as appropriate. These are analyzed regularly, and they feed into the University's system. The analysis of information/data and the drawing of conclusions is done in accordance with the requirements of the HAHE MIS (Olokliromeno Pliroforiako Ethniko Systima Poiotitas- OPESP).

Students are presented with the opportunity to evaluate the faculty and support personnel via anonymous surveys. Still, the EEAP found that student participation in course evaluations is relatively low, on average 18,5 % for registered students.

Employability and career paths of graduates are unavailable because no graduates exist from the newly established Department. About 12% of the 4th year students (i.e., 8-9 individuals) are expected to graduate by September 2023. A systematic approach is already implemented and included in the Department's website for the collection and processing of relevant data (e.g., Alumni Association) for subsequent use in the programme guidance.

The undergraduate programme is evaluated annually both by OMEA and the Undergraduate Curriculum Committee in order to improve its overall operation and achieve the stated goals.

In conclusion, the Department has been using the University systems to collect and analyses the relevant processes. Given the length of time that the Department has been in place, the evidence of its effectiveness is relatively limited. However, from the evidence presented to the EEAP, the approach to collection, analysis and use of information is effectively implemented.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Encourage students to complete surveys for all semester classes.
- The Department should explain and publicize annually how is capitalizing on the information content of student satisfaction surveys.

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

The Department has developed its website, <https://agro.uoa.gr>, which provides complete information in Greek and English about its operation and activities (undergraduate programme, learning outcomes, degree awarded, teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, learning opportunities available to students, synergies with stakeholders). EAAP noticed that the website is covering the structure, its purpose, quality assurance policies, and other aspects of the Department's operations. In addition, all information is up to date, clear, and easily accessible on the website, and there is the possibility of improving accessibility for people with dyslexia, visual impairments, etc., and voice support. Finally, there is no mention of the Department's social networks, apart from a newly established LinkedIn page dedicated for future alumni.

Public information concerning the new undergraduate programmes is made available through its website, <https://agro.uoa.gr>. The website is suitably structured in sections for easier access by visitors, and all the basic information concerning the academic unit is posted.

All essential information regarding the Department, undergraduate studies, announcements, activities, conferences/symposia, research activities of faculty members and contact information is available in separate tabs both in Greek and English, easily accessible on the website.

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 courses each staff member teaches is also available.

The basic need for daily information for students is met. Also, in a separate tab, the extroversion and the strategic synergies with major/local stakeholders are presented. Connection to all student services is easily made through relevant links from the front page of the website.

No information exists on the graduates of the Department since the first graduates are expected in September 2023.

Overall, the public information could be significantly improved in order to enhance the outreach of the unit, through information delivery and an active presence in social networks.

There is adequate website design, which provides information about research, administration, recent news, and upcoming events as they relate to the Department.

The website is modern and well structured so that visitors can easily find the information they are looking for. There are additional possibilities for improvements. Short videos of current students that talk about the Department could be added. These activities could target high school students who are on their way to enter the university (a visit to local high schools was mentioned by academic staff). Moreover, providing information to users via social networks is usually expected to be available.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- In the English version, there are some deficiencies, which, possibly soon, will be curated (e.g., <https://agro.uoa.gr/en/ypodomes/> or <https://agro.uoa.gr/zahariadis/>)
- The EAAP noticed a lack in the promotion of the Department to possible incoming foreign Erasmus students
- An explanatory text or a video with the curation of a career counsellor describing the Undergraduate Programme, the infrastructure of the Department, the Postgraduate / Doctoral / Postdoctoral Studies, the research, and life in Psachna town briefly could be of added value for the promotion of the Department.

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 Undergraduate Programme of Studies is periodically reviewed by the Curriculum Committee. The course material is under constant review in order to be in line with current educational needs as well as trends in international scientific research and market requirements. The review takes place every academic year. Students are requested to evaluate the attended courses using an electronic questionnaire. Each questionnaire includes 37 course-related questions, 21 on the course assignments, 6 on the instructor, 4 on the course laboratory-related and 5 on student-related needs. The student uses a 5-point scale (from 1 worst value to 5 best value) that allows comparisons of students' opinions through time. The Curriculum Committee gathers proposals for new courses or change/modification of existing courses and recommends them on to the competent bodies of the University. Student participation in the evaluation process was 18,5 %, which is very low. During the meeting between EEAP and the students, the latter mentioned that they are very satisfied with their studies. An External Advisory Board could assist in the revision of the study program based on new research directions and market needs.

Panel Judgement

Principle 10: Periodic internal review of the new study programmes	
Fully compliant	X
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 in the questionnaire to allow students to develop important aspects or express concerns that have not been addressed elsewhere.
- Consider establishing an External Advisory Board to assist in the revision of the study program based on new research directions and market needs.

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 present external evaluation and accreditation of the Undergraduate Programme of the Department is the first of its kind. As a newly established department, there has not been any previous external evaluation conducted before. Therefore, no determination can be made regarding whether the Department has considered recommendations from prior evaluations.

The lack of a previous evaluation report hinders the efficient verification of the program's continuous evolution and improvements. However, the Department has established a comprehensive process for reviewing the findings and recommendations from future external evaluations, as outlined in the provided documentation.

Upon receiving the evaluation report, the Department in coordination with OMEA will examine and analyses the report. Subsequently, proposed actions will be presented and discussed at a faculty meeting, and their decision will be forwarded to the MODIP of NKUA to initiate necessary improvements for the Undergraduate Programme.

All faculty members, OMEA, the Chair, and staff of the Department were well prepared for the meetings with the EEAP, indicating their recognition of the significance of this first external evaluation in the further development and success of the new undergraduate program. The EEAP formed a positive impression during discussions, presentations, and tele-visits to laboratories, classrooms, lecture halls, and other facilities.

It is worth noting the high level of interest demonstrated by the participation of senior officers from the NKUA, such as the Vice Rector and Chair of MODIP, in several meetings, and among the social partners. These observations highlight the strong collegiality that exists between the Chair, faculty, staff, and students in the Department.

In conclusion, the need for annual internal review reports has been recognized thus far, and it is essential to continue producing these reports in the same manner, ensuring even more intensive evaluations.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- In addition to the external evaluation report, it is crucial for the Department to continue conducting annual internal reviews. These internal reviews play a vital role in assessing and improving the newly established program.
- It is expected that the recommendations provided by EEAP will be carefully considered. Those recommendations that are feasible and beneficial should be implemented and incorporated into the policies of the Department.

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 Department of Agricultural Development, Agri-Food and Management of Natural Resources is part of the School of Rural Development, Nutrition and Sustainability of the NKUA. It is the first Department of this unique School. It has no relation with a former TEI, which was situated in the same campus for which, according to information received by the Department, the University has provided a full programme of studies in order to provide to its students to continue their studies and obtain a special diploma. During the transition period of the pre-existing 4-year undergraduate program, NKUA is responsible for delivering lectures, conducting examinations, and providing other provisions to the students until the formal completion of their program, which in most cases was expected to be the academic year 2022-2023.

During the discussions, the EEAP was informed that some of the Department faculty members taught the ex-TEI students during the transition period 2019 to 2023 and were expected to administer their final examinations.

Based on the above findings and analysis, the EEAP concludes that the Department was not responsible for intervening in the above-mentioned period. Therefore, the Department is deemed fully compliant with Principle 12.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

There are no specific recommendations for Principle 12.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

- The Department has implemented compliant, efficient mechanisms for monitoring and ensuring high quality of work and services. Quality assurance policies are already implemented regarding teaching delivery, assessment, and student progression. The existing quality assurance and continuous improvement policy aims to align practices with the strategic objectives the Department and the Institution.
- The faculty and staff are enthusiastic and dedicated to their mission. The students' overall experience is very positive. The enthusiasm of current students, employers, and other stakeholders was evident.
- The faculty and research staff are conducting research of regional, national, and international significance. The Department has developed collaborative research projects with other Universities and Research Centres.
- The participation of women in teaching, research, and administration is valued and recognized. The student gender ratio is balanced; more than half the student representatives that met with the EEAP were women.
- A collegial and friendly atmosphere between faculty, staff, and students.
- The Department does not have any graduates yet, but their careers will be followed by the Department and their advice will be considered in the future development of the curriculum, which is crucial for the Department's future development.

II. Areas of Weakness

- Student representatives are not included in OMEA and in the General Faculty Assembly meetings.
- Student participation in course/instructor evaluations is very low; the Department should make an effort to substantially increase student participation in the evaluation process.
- Many courses do not have laboratories associated with lectures, thus limiting the on-hand experience and training of the students.
- There are some deficiencies in the English version of the Department's website.
- The Department should implement an emergency response procedure and frequent emergency drills.
- The title of the Department does not correspond completely to the current curriculum.
- Availability of student dormitories on campus should be improved and works should be accelerated.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- **Specializations:** Provide a range of specialization options within the undergraduate program to accommodate students' diverse interests and career goals. Flexibility in choosing specializations allows students to tailor their education to align with their individual aspirations.
- **Sustainability Across the Curriculum:** Integrate sustainability principles and concepts throughout the program's curriculum, emphasizing the interconnectedness of social, economic, and environmental dimensions. This will help students understand the importance of sustainable development and equip them with the knowledge and skills to address environmental challenges.
- **Environmental Ethics and Social Justice:** Include courses or modules that explore the ethical dimensions of environmental issues and promote social justice in environmental decision-making. This will help students develop a deep sense of responsibility, empathy, and a broader perspective on environmental challenges.
- **Environmental Policy and Regulation:** Ensure that the curriculum incorporates updates on environmental policies, regulations, and international agreements. This will provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the legal and policy frameworks that shape environmental management and conservation.
- **Research Opportunities:** Encourage undergraduate students to engage in research activities by promoting undergraduate research grants, mentorship programs, and research conferences. This will cultivate a culture of inquiry, critical thinking, and intellectual curiosity.
- **Industry Collaboration:** Foster strong relationships with industry partners, organizations, and professionals to facilitate internships, cooperative education programs, and industry projects. This collaboration will provide students with real-world experience and increase their employability upon graduation.
- **Advisory Board:** Establishment of an External Advisory Board should be considered which will guide the continuous revision and further development of the curriculum.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: **1, 2, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, and 12.**

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **3, 4, 5, and 9.**

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

- 1. Professor Emeritus, Spyros Pavlostathis (Chair)**
Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, Georgia, USA

- 2. Professor, Constantin Vamvakas**
f. Academic Counselor, University of Ghent, Ghent, Belgium

- 3. Associate Professor, Vasileios Fotopoulos**
Cyprus University of Technology, Limassol, Cyprus

- 4. Mr. Spyridon Rizos**
Member of the Geotechnical Chamber of Greece, Athens, Greece

- 5. Mrs. Aphrodite Lioliou**
Student, Department of Agriculture, International Hellenic University, Thessaloniki, Greece