



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ  
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



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Ανώτατης Εκπαίδευσης  
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# Accreditation Report for the New Undergraduate Study Programme

Public Administration

Institution: Hellenic Open University

Date: 17 July 2023



Επιχειρησιακό Πρόγραμμα  
Ανάπτυξη Ανθρώπινου Δυναμικού,  
Εκπαίδευση και Διά Βίου Μάθηση

Με τη συγχρηματοδότηση της Ελλάδας και της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης



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Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of  
the New Undergraduate Study Programme in operation of **Public**  
**Administration** of the **Hellenic Open University** for the purposes of  
granting accreditation.

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

### **I. THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION & ACCREDITATION PANEL**

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the new undergraduate programme on **Public Administration** of the **Hellenic Open University** comprised the following four (4) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

- 1. Prof. Efstathios K. Banakas (Chair)**  
University of East Anglia, Norwich, United Kingdom
- 2. Prof. Marios Katsioloudes**  
American University of Cyprus, Larnaka, Cyprus
- 3. Prof. Sophie Papaefthymiou**  
Institute for Political Science in Lyons, France
- 4. Mrs. Eleftheria Madika**  
Student of Business Administration, University of Western Macedonia, Kozani, Greece

## II. Review Procedure and Documentation

The Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (HAHE) formed an external and independent panel of experts to conduct an assessment of the compliance of the undergraduate programme on Public Administration (DHD) of the Hellenic Open University (HOU) in accordance with the Quality Assurance requirements. The assessment was conducted online through document reviews (related to the undergraduate study programme on Public Administration), operation and quality assurance initiatives, interviews and online observation of premises (through video). The assessment aimed: a) to evaluate the fulfilment of the HAHE requirements of the relevant quality standard of the study programme and b) to comment on its compliance, effectiveness and applicability for the scope of the requirements.

### **First Day Schedule**

On Monday the 3 July 2023 at 16:00, the External Evaluation and Accreditation Panel (EEAP) had a private online meeting to discuss the proposal report, allocate tasks and list issues related to the accreditation process.

At 18:30, EEAP attended an online meeting with the Vice Rector and President of MODIP Prof. Ioannis Sibetheros, the Dean of the School of Social Sciences, Prof. Avgoustinos Dimitras and the Study Programme Director, Prof. Ioannis Pscharis. They gave a presentation of the DHD undergraduate programme, department profile, its aims and objectives, staffing and their achievements, student numbers, SWOT Analysis and structure and overview of the programme.

Subsequently, at 19:15, the EEAP had a meeting with OMEA: Charalampos Anthopoulos (Prof.), Eleni Sfakianaki (Assoc. Prof.) and MODIP: Stylianos Zerefos (Prof.), Dimitrios Stergiou (Assoc. Prof.), Dimitrios Filippis (Assoc. Prof), Ms. Evangelia Kaldani (MODIP Staff), Mr. Nikos Karousos (Internal Evaluation Unit) and Mr. Serafeim Karaiskakis (Strategic Planning & Development Office). They discussed the ways that the DHD programme was operating in terms of assuring compliance with standards and internal programme monitoring and evaluation. During the meeting the EEAP had the chance to ask OMEA and MODIP members questions. Various clarifications and explanations were provided on the overall accreditation process.

Before the closing of the Zoom meeting, the panel had a debriefing meeting where the members shared the findings of the day's session and organized the next day's online meeting with the department.

## **Second Day Schedule**

On Tuesday, the 4 July 2023, at 16:00, EEAP had a meeting with the programme's teaching staff members (DEP) and the Adjunct Teaching Staff (SEP). DEP: Athanasios Michiotis (Prof.) and Alexandros Koulis (Assist.Prof.). SEP: Maria Pempetzoglou (Prof.), Katerina Savvaidou (Assoc. Prof.), Dimosthenis Kassavetis (Assoc. Prof.), Miltiadis Sarigiannidis (Assoc. Prof.), Lambros Mpampalioutas (Assist. Prof.), Dr. Aikaterini Papanikolaou, Dr. Christina Akrivopoulou and Dr. Eftychios Fytrakis.

During this meeting the EEAP had an extensive discussion about the student-centred teaching and learning processes, methods being used to link teaching with research, staff workload, professional development and career advancement, link between teaching and research, teaching staff's involvement in applied research, funding of the departmental staff, staff and student mobility, the structure, content and evolution of the curriculum, as well as various other topics.

At 17:00, the EEAP had a private online meeting with undergraduate students studying at different levels of the programme. During this meeting, the students expressed their overall satisfaction with the DHD programme, its study programme and their overall learning experience.

Later, at 18:00, the EEAP had the opportunity to watch a video with the facilities of the university, such as classrooms, lecture halls, amphitheatres, the library, administrative service's offices, laboratories. Through this video, as well as discussions with the Study Programme Director: Ioannis Pscharis (Prof.), the teaching staff: Alexanros Koulis (Assist. Prof.), the adjunct teaching staff: Dr. Vasiliki Dalakou, and the administrative staff: Ms. Marianna Taliouri (Chief Administrative Officer), Ms. Alexandra Tziferi (Education Department), Mr. Theodoros Vagenas (Laison Office), Ms. Alexandra Christakopoulou (Personnel Department), 27, par. 1 sec. A, of n. 2083/1992, Ms. Christina-Tereza Vosna (Student Registry Department) and Mr. Giorgos Temponeras (Premises and Building Projects Department, Office Application and Software Team), it was ascertained that the learning materials, equipment and facilities are adequate for the successful provision of the programme under review.

Subsequently, at 19:30, the EEAP had a meeting with employers/social partners: Dr. Athanasios Papaioannou (President, The Supreme Council for Civil Personnel Selection -ASEP), Dr. Paraskevi Dramalioti (President, National Centre for Public Administration and Local Government), Ms. Vivi Charalampogianni (Ministry of Interior, Secretary General for Human Resources of Public Sector), Emeritus Prof. Odysseas-Ioannis Zoras(Secretary General for Higher Education, Ministry of Education and religious affairs), Mr. Konstantinos Papadimitriou (President, Administrative Champer of

Greece), Ms. Dimitra Manologlou (Ministry of Civil Protection, Prison Officer, reservation store: ElaionasThivas), Mr. Elias Apostolopoulos (Mayor of Papagou-Cholargos Municipality, President of the Institute of Local Government of the Central Union of Municipalities of Greece KEDE), Ms. Papadio Kalentaki (ELGO DIMITRA, Heraklion Crete), Mr. Giorgos Gioulos (President of Board of the Koinoniko Polykentro, research and training institute of ADEDY), Ms. Triantafylia Karrou (Local Government employee, Rodopi), Ms. Aikaterini Housidou (Public Service for Employment OAED, Orestiada, Evros) and Ms. Alexandra Rogkakou (Director, National Transparency Authority, Head of Interim Government Department). All employers and social partners provided positive comments regarding the programme.

At 20:15, the EEAP had a debriefing to discuss the outcomes of the online review and the drafting of the overall report.

At 20:45, the EEAP members had a meeting with OMEA and MODIP representatives to discuss several points and findings and ask them additional information and clarifications to help them in their overall evaluation.

Finally, at 21:15, during a closing meeting with the Vice-Rector/President of MODIP, the Head of the Department, OMEA and MODIP, the EEAP members informed the Department's representatives about their findings.

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

The undergraduate program in Public Administration (PA) at the Hellenic Open University (HOU) commenced its operation during the academic year 2018-2019. Its primary objective is to provide advanced and contemporary education in the organization and functioning of the state and public administration.

The program's duration is four years (8 academic semesters) and corresponds to 240 academic units. The qualification awarded is Bachelor's Degree.

Graduates of secondary education or equivalent degrees from both domestic and international institutions are eligible for admission.

Upon successful completion of the program, graduates will be able to:

- Identify the fundamental principles of Greek public law and the specific principles that regulate the actions of public administration.
- Identify the structure, organization, functions, and procedures of public administration, as well as the European and international frameworks within which it operates.
- Apply new forms of governance in the field of public administration.
- Recognize the strategic role of public administration in economic development and the competitiveness of the country.
- Define the scope of their jurisdiction in conjunction with the broader functions of the institution in which they operate.
- Utilize complex analysis and policy implementation tools in public administration, as well as specific forms of related applications.

Applicants who are accepted into the program are individuals who meet the following criteria:

- High School Graduates
- Knowledge of Computers is required.
- Initially, there was a requirement for a five-year prior professional experience to enrol.
- Today, individuals can enrol in the program without prior professional experience.

The number of active students in the first four years of the program's operation is 2,402, the number of graduates is 211, the number of enrolled students for the academic year 2022-2023 is 407 (1st semester).

The active classes in the first semester of the academic year 2022-2023 amount to 174 and the student-to-instructor ratio is approximately 25.

## 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**

#### **Findings**

The Hellenic Open University (HOU), founded by article 27, par. 1 sec. A, of Act of Parliament n.2083/1992, is an independent and fully self-governing Higher Education Institution and

operates in the form of a Public Law Legal Entity. It carries the international distinctive name Hellenic Open University (HOU). It is carried out under the supervision of the State, which is exercised by the Minister of Education. Its operation is determined by Act of Parliament n.2552/97, as it applies today.

In terms of the institution's strategic planning process, the Panel evaluated the Strategic and Business Plan of the HOU, 2022-2025; the Self Study report for the Department of Public Administration, March 2022; the Business Plan for the four years for the Department of Public Administration and the School of Social Sciences, 2022-2025; the Introductory Report by the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU), February, 15, 2022; and the Feasibility and Sustainability Report for the Establishment of the new programme in Public Administration of the School of Social Sciences, which were all submitted for review.

The undergraduate program under review "Public Administration" (PA) had from the beginning of its operation the objective of sustainable education. During the planning and strategic organization of the PA the need for sustainable dissemination of knowledge was identified, so as to contribute in the long run to the educational landscape of higher education in Greece.

Furthermore, the vision of the HOU is to be a Public, open-minded, contemporary, extrovert University that ensures high quality of Education and promotes Innovation, Research and Excellence, following international standards. The mission of the program is to offer knowledge to students, which will allow them to determine the fundamental principles of Greek public law, as well as the special authorities that regulate the action of the public administration. Through the theme units (modules) that make up the curriculum, the aim of the Public Administration program is to provide of circular knowledge on the theory of public administration and politics, but also on organization and operation of the public sector.

More specifically, the design of the PA program took into account the need for university education to contribute to society in a continuous and long-term manner. Until recently, education activity at the highest level was focused on providing knowledge related to receiving a degree without taking into account two specific parameters: first, the need to interface with society and the labour market, secondly, the need for continuous self-improvement of the student and academic community beyond the narrow confines of a degree. The HOU redefines the idea of sustainability in education for its students, the majority of whom are already professionally settled and pursuing their careers.

The disproportionately large number of SEP temporary employees, vs DEP permanent employees could be a threat to the HOU's success in the long run.

## **Analysis**

Based on the aforementioned documents, the Strategic Plan aims for the HOU to maintain and improve its position on the national and international academic maps. The decisions for the updated Strategic Planning resulted from an evaluation of the current situation as well as proposals submitted following public consultation. The strategy is written with a four-year time horizon in mind, 2022-2025, and is organized in the form of Strategic Objectives. The

Strategic Objectives are accompanied by more specific actions that are evaluated using measurement indicators for each axis of its activity foundation.

The feasibility of operating the PA program of the HOU stems first and foremost from the university's unique structure and function, which fills a significant gap in higher education prior to its establishment and operation. The Greek Open University provides university education to citizens who have already begun their professional careers or who did not have the opportunity to study at a university immediately after completing secondary school.

The duration of the PA program is four academic years, broken up into eight semesters. Three (3) modules totalling ten (10) credits (ECTS) each are included in each semester. The HOU website has a link at <https://www.eap.gr/education/undergraduate/public-administration/> that lists the program's structure by year and semester of study.

Furthermore, the program's goal is to provide university education to students who are already employed in the public sector, thereby directly and eventually upgrading their professional qualifications.

Because the infrastructure and services for learning and student support are primarily central in the HOU, the university's coverage is horizontal. As a result, the appropriate infrastructure has been developed in order to collect and manage information about student progress and to assist in the development of strategies and policies to improve the education services provided. As part of the HOU community, the PA program is fully integrated and aligned with the central management of the university.

The PA program is concerned with the prioritization of research. So, starting in 2022, a postgraduate program (MSc) in "Public Administration" was launched, allowing both graduates of the department and graduates of other departments to obtain specialized knowledge and deepen their understanding of public administration.

The direct link between the master program and the undergraduate study program ensures that the two study cycles are in synchronization, and that is an advantage of the program.

## **Conclusions**

Based on the readings of the various documents provided by the Institution and on the interviews with the various stakeholders at the University, the Panel concluded the following:

- The strategic plans at the University, Faculty and Program levels are comprehensive and aligned amongst them. It is not clear as to who has been involved in drafting these strategic plans.
- There is a comprehensive SWOT analysis which was conducted in 2021 however, the Strategic and Business Plan of the HOU, was written to cover the years 2022-2025; furthermore, there is an absence of a PESTEL analysis.
- The Vision and Mission of the University and the Program are clear, realistic and concise.
- The SMART objectives of the PA program are in alignment with the Vision and Mission of the program.

- There is a need to address each weakness identified in the SWOT analysis and develop clear actions as to how to address these weaknesses.
- There is evidence of SMART objectives and Who will do What, When and How, however, all these objectives have deadlines for 31/12/2023. This is a short timeline for the efficient and effective implementation of all these.
- There is a need to be more aggressive in attracting more international students and faculty.
- More permanent faculty members should be hired so that the program doesn't depend heavily on part-timers.
- The structure of the program and the courses offered appear to be realistic and relevant to the PA's mission and objectives, however, the Panel has not detected any elective courses being offered.

## Panel Judgement

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

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

### **Panel Recommendations**

- More permanent faculty and administrative staff should be hired to ensure the viability, sustainability and strategic position of the program.
- More realistic deadlines should be assigned for the efficient and effective implementation of the SMART objectives.
- More aggressive marketing in attracting more international students and faculty members.
- Add more masters' courses/programs in English.
- Add electives courses to the program of study.
- Encourage more students to participate in Erasmus exchange programs wherever feasible.
- An in depth PESTEL analysis should be conducted so that the Institution/Faculty/Program have a more realistic and clearer perspective of the external environment.
- It might be a good practice to create an advisory board with representatives from internal and external stakeholders who will provide the institution with high-level advice on its strategic planning on annual and/or long-term basis.

## 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

#### Findings

The Revised Quality Policy of the Institution includes information about the participation of all stakeholders in the creation and improvement of all Programmes of Studies and in the implementation of all Quality Systems regarding teaching and administrative staff. An annual internal evaluation of the new undergraduate programme (PA) is implemented by the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG) in collaboration with the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) of the Institution.

The Updated Strategic Design of the Institution (2022-2025) contains the Strategic Goals relative to 6 basic fields of activities and priorities of the Institution, namely education, research, social impact, internationalization, academic environment and quality assurance. The Goals, whose productivity and effectiveness are evaluated annually, are subject to revision.

The Quality Policy of the Institution is disseminated to all members and is uploaded on the Institution's site. It is also available on the MODIP site.

The Quality Policy of the UGP in Public Administration of the School of Social Sciences is available on the site of the Institution. The content of the above documents has been approved by the competent collective organs, including MODIP.

The Unit affirms that the quality policy of the Undergraduate Study Programme (USP) "Public Administration (DHD)", expressed in the QAP of the Unit, is in accordance with the Quality Policy of the Hellenic Open University and is implemented by means of procedures which will assure the competence, quality, and adequacy of the School's resources, the suitability of the structure and the organization of the USP, the adequacy of the teaching staff's qualifications, and the quality of the School support services. The UPS is assessed yearly by the Institution in collaboration with the OMEA, the Programme Director and the Institution's Quality Assurance Unit.

The Institution Quality Assurance system ensures that the Department has clear objectives and keeps track of the relevant indicators for quality assurance following well defined procedures.

The Unit's objectives include the structure and suitability of the Study Programme's organization, achievement of learning outcomes and acquisition of skills, in accordance with the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education; they also include qualifications of the teaching staff, promotion of the quality and effectiveness of teaching and research work, connection of teaching with research, suitability of the graduates skills for the job market, and quality of support services, such as administrative services, library access, and student care.

The Unit confirms the commitment of all stakeholders to implementing the policy of promoting its academic profile and determining the means of attaining the programme's continuous improvement and strategic goals. The quality assurance system of the UGP is reviewed annually through the cooperation of the internal Evaluation Group (IEG) with the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) of the Institution.

The quality policy is available online at the website of the DHD UPS:

<https://www.eap.gr/education/undergraduate/public-administration/>

### **Analysis of Judgement**

The Unit confirms the Institution's will to maintain and constantly improve its quality policy in conformity with the rules of inclusivity, transparency and scientific measurements of the

undertaken actions' outcomes (Doc. B.1). All stakeholders are informed and invited to participate in the procedures. The Institution's Policy is evaluated annually by MODIP.

The quality procedures, presented in the various documents provided to the Panel, also reveal the Unit's will to continuously improve the quality of teaching and research and to seek excellence. Drawing on the work of the University-wide MODIP, the Unit is further supported by a very active OMEA Committee. Both MODIP and OMEA hold regular meetings.

The goals which the Unit seeks to attain correspond to those set by the Institution. The requirements of Principle 2 concerning the components of the Undergraduate Programme overlap with those of Principle 3; therefore, they will be discussed in the following pages.

What is worth mentioning here is the total lack of information about the appropriateness of the Temporary Teaching Staff qualifications, in the documents relative to both the Institution and the Unit.

Several weak points are noticed in the functioning of both the Institution and the USP; most of them are not unknown to the Unit, as they are mentioned in the Documentation provided to the Panel (cf. B. 25, B.25.2; Presentation of the USP 1.3; 1.4; MODIP).

## **Conclusions**

Pioneer in the academic environment of Greece, the Institution is a pole of interest for both academics and prospective students. One of the reasons of its attractiveness lies in the fact that it admits secondary education graduates who enrol in the Programme without passing the National competitive examination for University entry in Greece and acquire a degree which is equivalent to that delivered by the Hellenic Public Universities (see comment about this under Principle 5, below).

The Institution's commitment to implementing a quality policy and to continuously improving its programmes is threatened by the lack of a rigorous procedure about the Temporary Teaching Staff requirements. It is also compromised by the Institution's lack of autonomy and by the Administrative Committee's mode of appointment.

In its early state of operation, the Unit copes successfully with the quality of most procedures.

The Panel considers that both the Institution and the Unit have to resolve the above-mentioned issues if they wish to meet the current challenges and to occupy a central place in the academia.

This remark notwithstanding, the Panel notices their vision, ambition, inclusivity and continuous concern with scientific measurement of their Quality Policy; it appreciates the enthusiasm of the academic staff and its commitment to the students' success.

The achievement of the goals set by the Unit is appropriately monitored and updated, in a manner driven by the School leadership and OMEA/MODIP but involving all levels of Unit governance.

## Panel Judgement

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

## Panel Recommendations

The Panel recommends that the Institution and the Unit:

- Ensure that the Temporary Teaching Staff is appropriately qualified by establishing a rigorous and transparent procedure and objective criteria of recruitment.
- Re-organize the lists of strategic goals included in the QAPS with a view to consolidation in order to cope with current global issues.
- Further publicize the quality targets.

## 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**

### **Findings**

THE UGP PA has been designed in order to strengthen the potential and offer promotion and further opportunities to Public administration staff by means of an academic degree. The Institution conceived the UGP PA in collaboration with the then Ministry of Administrative Reform. The programme has been designed by a team composed by the Institution's teaching staff, external scholars and senior civil servants.

The UGP is meant to remedy the scarcity of academic degrees in Public Administration in Greece. Attentive to the demand of the Greek Public Administration and Greek society, it is updated regularly; nowadays it includes students who do not hold a position in Public Administration.

It is conceived of as a programme of distance learning, where students benefit from the freedom in the organization of their working time and workload. Accordingly, University teachers assume the role of a tutor, who provides advice and help for the preparation of student dissertations and final exam. Three 4-hour meetings of the class with the Tutor are scheduled during the term – 5 during the academic year; they are dedicated to the discussion of the material uploaded weekly. Students are required to possess digital skills upon admission.

Each group of three courses forms a Module (“Thematic Unit”), coordinated by a teaching staff member. The Curriculum is composed of 72 courses, distributed in 8 semesters. The Thematic Units are either semestrial (5 weeks) or annual (10 weeks). The Curriculum course load compares with appropriate, broadly accepted standards for the specific area of study as it uses the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS). 240 ECTS points are required for the acquisition of the degree, divided into 30 ECTS points per semester for 8 semesters in total. It is classified according to the UNESCO ISCED-2013 code 0413 based on the field of education – Management and Administration and based on the level of study.

Courses are said to be of both theoretical and practical interest. They focus on principles, institutions, legal rules and administrative policies, economics and logistics. The programme is thus considered to correspond to the “interdisciplinary nature of Public Administration”. It also provides “specialized knowledge on the Public Administration of the Public Sector, with emphasis of Regional Administration, Governance, and the organization of the Public Service, focused on the production of graduates who are informed on the latest developments in the field”.

The learning outcomes are described by the Unit in various documents. They are relative to the acquisition of basic knowledge about the institutions of Public Administration at the national, local, European and international level, the principles and legal rules of national, European and international public law, public policy, and the methods and basic concepts of political science. Graduates are supposed to be able “to recognise the strategic role of public administration in the economic development and competitiveness of the country”, “to apply the new forms of governance in the field of public administration” and to use “complex tools for analysing and implementing policies in public administration, as well as forms of concrete applications”. They are also said to be equipped to implement “new forms of governance in

public administration, taking into account the international practices for the modernization of public administration”.

The UPS offers the students and the academic staff mobility opportunities, as it is part of the ERASMUS and LEONARDO programmes.

The Programme has to comply with the basic requirements of the Standards by the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) in order to be approved – or revised - by the Institution.

### **Analysis of Judgement**

The Unit has developed a sufficient undergraduate study programme. The overall structure and content of the programme is said to be superior to other established programmes in Europe, insofar as it deals with both the classic and recent conception of the public administration.

The following weak points are noted :

#### **1. Curriculum**

The structure of the programme is clearly articulated but offers fragmented information on several courses which are taught through the distribution of book excerpts and other material chosen by the Tutor. Although it is necessary to introduce the students to all fields of study, namely law, economics, political science and what is called in the documents provided to the Panel « public administration » (whatever that may mean), the random repartition of courses in most Thematic Units, and the notable lack of respect of a pedagogic, progressive order - from basic principles and theories to more specific knowledge and theory implementation - causes the students unnecessary dispersion, confusion, work overload and anxiousness, and impedes a comprehensive familiarization with the various disciplines.

The Unit correctly obliges the students to pass the exam of the previous thematic units as a prerequisite for the choice of courses scheduled in a later semester; however, this would be more beneficial to their training, if courses were taught in a progressive order.

Regarding the Study Programme, there is also no evidence of feedback for its improvement, from external stakeholders.

#### **2. Tutors**

The Unit has established advisory procedures in order to assist students throughout their studies. Students indicated that tutors are helpful and always available to advise them and to provide educational material and help in the preparation of their dissertations, as well as advice in their studies during the Term, in a relationship of mutual trust. Tutors, who work under the supervision of a coordinator, have to set clear information on course structure and learning outcomes in the beginning of the term and to upload relevant material on a weekly basis; students prepare three (3) dissertations per thematic unit, one of a considerable number of pages and two shorter.

There seems to be a regular contact between students and tutors, which ensures the appropriate training of the students and seeks to remedy the lack of in situ lectures.

The enthusiasm of the Teaching staff and its commitment to the students' success has been beneficial to the Unit. However, while the number of tenured teaching staff is extremely low (1 member) that of the Adjunct (temporary) is unjustifiably high (181). Although uncontestedly committed to the functioning of the Unit and the students' success, the temporary teaching staff adopts many diverse approaches.

Each Tutor is appointed to one group of approximately 30 students. There is no information about the total number of groups in each course and the work overload of the Tutors. As there are 170-175 or even 181 Tutors appointed to 72 courses – unless the number corresponds to both UG and Post-Graduate Programmes -, different Tutors seem to be appointed to one course. This seems to threaten the coherence of the programme as it may induce heterogenous material and render the coordination difficult.

There is no evidence of the Tutors recruitment procedure requirements. The Panel regrets that the Tutors' qualification and adequate specialization does not figure in the submitted material. No list of areas of specialization of the teaching staff and its relation to the courses taught has been provided to the Panel. No information is provided regarding the Syllabus and the dissertations' topics either. The establishment of a coherent programme requires more than a few meetings organised by the Coordinator. Accordingly, the hierarchy established between the numerous Tutors, the Coordinators, the Director of the Programme of Studies, the School and the Administrative Committee, does not necessarily guarantee the coherence of the programme.

Last but not least, the Panel has not received information about the Administrative Committee members' appointment criteria, composition, qualifications and duration of their mandate. It considers that both the Institution and the Academic Unit are responsible for the Administrative Committee's status and competence.

Regarding dissertations, no information is provided about the number of topics suggested; moreover, the Panel does not know whether they are imposed to students by each Tutor or discussed collectively among Tutors and/or among Tutors and students.

The employment relationship of the Tutors is said to be based on a one (1) year contract, renewable twice. The short duration of their appointment makes the identification of the Unit's academic profile and of the Study Programme quality difficult.

### 3. Students –courses

The Student Guide is clear and comprehensive. The Panel considers that the Student Guide is appropriate and sufficiently documented.

The Unit offers a course on the basic principles of administrative law in the 1st term ; this is highly insufficient and has to be remedied by the creation of two different courses in Administrative Law (General and Special Part). A notable absence from the curriculum is the lack of any courses of Comparative law and comparative European law, which are increasingly important in our time of internationalization and globalization of public services.

All courses are compulsory and taught in Greek. Elective courses, dealing mainly with current global approaches and issues, would broaden the horizons of the students. Courses taught in English would enrich their capacities in reading English bibliography and encourage them to enrol in ERASMUS programmes.

There is continuous enrichment of the teaching material by means of both online programmes and actions (KALLIPOS ; book loans) and printed books (EUDOXOS).

Continuous control of the students by the Tutor is appreciated by the Panel; however, without being aware of Tutors' qualification and specialization, the Panel cannot fully evaluate the quality of teaching in the programme.

There is no evidence that students develop practical skills. There is no organized internship in a public administration, which would be beneficial to the prospective civil servants and would also offer mobility opportunities and new experience to those already holding a position in Public Administration. The Programme is multidisciplinary but does not include an interdisciplinary approach to Public administration, which may be acquired only by the organization of interdisciplinary seminars.

Teaching is said to be based on the study of Greek, European and International cases, but no sample of case study is provided to the Panel.

Moreover, there are no courses ensuring the acquisition and improvement of digital skills. It is common experience in the Academia that mature students are not sufficiently familiar with all digital tools.

Students should be trained in conducting research, and this implies special training in the methodology of writing a dissertation.

#### 4. Learning outcomes

The learning outcomes are limited to an elementary familiarization with Public Administration. Specific administrative policies and the interaction with the private sector are not part of the curriculum. The European, international and global levels are insufficiently focused, while global issues seem to be totally neglected. In a nutshell, although the Unit affirms it covers both the traditional and current conception of public administration, several courses relative to current methods and issues are not included in the curriculum.

There appears to be no course in the new forms of governance in public administration, as well as in public/private partnership, public health, corruption, climate change, migration, tax havens, geopolitics.

The Unit informs the Panel in a vague statement that graduates are equipped to learn how to use 'the tools...', without indicating the tools it refers to.

## 5. Research

The research activities and publications of the Adjunct (Temporary) Teaching Staff are very interesting and cover a broad spectrum of topics. However, most of them are not relevant for a Department of Public Administration. The Panel regrets that there is no information about the staff's specialisation and consecutive familiarisation with the taught topics.

## 6. Compliance

An annual review and audit of the QA system of the UGP through the co-operation of the IEG with the QAU of the institution is established.

## Conclusions

The programme combines the disciplines of law, economics, political science and "public administration", offering mainly theoretical courses. Most of them deal with classic themes.

Special attention has been paid to the following points:

a) The curriculum is not structured according to a progressive order, i.e., from the basic notions in the different fields to thorough analysis of the legal regulations and public policies; devoid of rational organization, it risks offering the students a fragmented knowledge of each field; modules (thematic units), especially those taught in the later terms, should be composed of courses belonging to the same field. As far as the content of the courses is concerned, focus on administrative law is largely insufficient, to the extent that students attend one single course in the law's basic principles; two different courses should be added, covering the general and the special part of the discipline. Several sectors of law are not taught ex., the law of the judicial and of the penitentiary system, the law of cultural heritage.

There is no evidence that there is special training of the students in IT. Artificial Intelligence should be included in the curriculum.

b) the learning outcomes and qualifications are in accordance with the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education (240 ECTS).

c) there is no information about the weekly programme in each module (thematic unit); the suggested bibliography is relevant; however, the students consider the excerpts uploaded insufficient for their training and regret that no books are distributed to them. In spite of these complaints, the score of the students, as transmitted to the Panel, is very satisfying, and makes clear the successful interaction between students and teaching staff.

d) there is no evidence of the teaching staff's qualification and of its adequacy to the Studies Programme.

e) the teaching staff has produced a considerable number of interesting publications and research works; however, the Adjunct (Temporary) Teaching Staff publications are not always relevant to the taught courses; several members have not published anything in relation to the programme.

f) The Panel has been informed by the Unit that the teaching staff communicates its research to students and discusses the relevant topics through regular meetings and dissertations, but it has not had access to any Syllabus.

g) It is expected that most of the graduates, who are already civil servants, will be promoted upon graduation, and that the prospective civil servants will be adequately equipped for a public administration position.

h) Support services like administration, libraries and student care seem to function satisfactorily. The students indicated that they do not have *in situ* access to other Universities' libraries.

i) The QA system of the UGP is reviewed through the cooperation of the IEG with the QAU of the Institution.

### Panel Judgement

<b>Principle3: Design, approval and monitoring of the quality of the new undergraduate programmes</b>	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	X
Non-compliant	

## Panel Recommendations

- Restructure the curriculum by adopting a progressive order of the modules (thematic units), by making them homogenous and by enriching it with new courses, both in law (ex. law of the judicial system, of the penitentiary system, of the cultural heritage, of public health) and in other disciplines (e.g., new public management, IT, AI, geopolitics). Regarding progressive order: follow a rational exposition of the topics, i.e., starting with history, principles and theories and continuing with specialized information at the national, local, transnational, international and global level.
- Replace the fragmented exposition of courses within a Thematic Unit by two or even three courses in the same field, i.e., law, economics, political science, public administration.
- Create two courses in Administrative Law (General and Special Part), instead of the existing introductory course. Create a more consistent course in Constitutional Law.
- Organize interdisciplinary seminars.
- Add elective courses.
- Dispense courses in English.
- Provide English language courses.
- Provide training in dissertation methodology.
- Consider courses and permanent training in IT in the undergraduate programme of studies, for the acquisition of digital skills.
- Establish an oral presentation (online) of the final dissertations.
- Improve the learning outcomes, by the addition of new courses in the new forms of government and in the global issues for public administration (e.g., climate change, global poverty and global public goods, migrations, corruption, tax evasion and tax havens).
- Organize oral online presentations of the dissertations, in order to encourage students to further develop their rhetoric and dialectic skills and enhance the students' interaction in class.
- Include the practical training in the official undergraduate programme credit structure.
- Make obvious the qualification, the appointed course and the work overload of the Adjunct (Temporary) teaching staff, which is definitely committed to the students but cannot ensure coherent content and methodology, because of its great number.
- Ask the Ministry for the appointment of tenured teaching staff.
- Invite international Academic staff.
- Give the students access to the books which include the uploaded excerpts suggested by the Tutor.
- Give the students access *in situ* to other Universities' libraries.

## Principle 4: Student-centered 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

### **Findings**

The approach to learning is student-centred to the extent that there is regular communication of the students with the Tutors, who continuously control their assiduity and training. Students discuss the teaching material in class and submit dissertations. The Tutor's role is outlined in Doc. B.18).

Due to the nature of this education, there are no lectures and seminars; however, this in no way compromises the interaction of the students with the teaching staff.

Students are active partners in the learning process. They are encouraged to conduct research and submit written homework.

The Unit respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, thanks to the aforementioned relation between students and tutors, and by establishing scholarships based on social criteria. The Tutors are trained in distance teaching through special seminars. However, there is no evidence that enabled learning paths are flexible and that different modes of delivery are used. Regarding the pedagogical methods, which have been described under Principle 2 (supra), no variety has been noticed by the Panel. This does not imply that

tutors are not attentive to the specific needs of the students and do not implement appropriate teaching methodology. They ensure adequate guidance and support. The Panel is convinced of the Tutors' commitment and has praised it in previous developments. Moreover, the Tutors' obligations regarding providing the students support, guidance and encouragement figure in the Institution's Regulation of the Teaching Staff Obligations.

The Unit affirms regularly evaluating and adjusting the modes of delivery and application of pedagogical methods aiming at improvement: one source of adjustment is the broad discussion and exchange of information with external institutions, like the National Centre of Public Administration and Local Government (EKΔΔA) and the National School of Public Administration.

Student surveys of the quality and effectiveness of teaching, as well as feedback from the student associations, are supposed to contribute to the improvement of the teaching methods and material. Student surveys are conducted online before the final exam. Additionally, students are invited to give feedback and share thoughts, comments and ideas for improvement through their Tutor.

The evaluation questionnaires are formulated in a way which does not give the students the opportunity of commenting teaching and administrative procedures, beyond the pre-set formal answers.

There appears to be a regular evaluation by the Unit of the quality and effectiveness of teaching, as documented by the student surveys. Statistical and qualitative analyses of the survey results are used for the improvement of teaching at all levels, from class to the Institution, through the UGP and the School.

Tutors may be informed about both the student surveys and the coordinators' opinion so that they can improve their teaching.

The Unit affirms that the Complaints Platform also serves the goal of commenting on the effectiveness of teaching. The Institution has designed a programme of management of the students' complaints regarding teaching. This procedure will be available to students during their curriculum; it will consist of an electronic form on the site of the Institution ([study.eap.gr/courses.eap.gr](http://study.eap.gr/courses.eap.gr)). A complaints procedure regarding the Institution's administrative affairs has already been established (cf. B.17).

A formal procedure for student appeals has been established, which includes the Academic Counsellor, the Complaints Platform, the Undergraduate Programme Committee and the Student Advocate.

### **Analysis of Judgement**

The new undergraduate programme is delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in the learning process.

There is no information about the frequency of the Unit's exchange with the aforementioned Institutions of Public Administration.

Evaluation questionnaires do not contain the decisive question, which should precede all others, namely a question about the students' own workload during the term and for the preparation of the final exam, without which no evaluation can be informative of the teaching method and of the teaching staff's competence.

### **Conclusions**

The Unit applies appropriate procedures for dealing with student complaints. The programme is delivered in an environment that promotes mutual respect and puts the students at the centre of the learning process, while respecting and reinforcing their autonomy.

### **Panel Judgement**

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

### **Panel Recommendations**

- Check the teaching and administrative staff compliance with the students' suggestions and the critical comments expressed in the evaluation questionnaires.
- Involve students in the design of the questionnaires.
- Include questions about the students' own workload during the term and for the preparation of the final exam.
- Make of Tutors' qualification in distance teaching a recruitment prerequisite.

## **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**

#### **Findings**

According to the information provided by the Institution, the HOU has the characteristic of centralised registration and support of all MA students provided by the EAP through single structures. Thus, it has established infrastructures to collect and manage information relevant

to student progress and to help formulate strategies and policies to improve the education services provided.

#### Admissions and fees

Applicants with a secondary school leaving certificate are admitted to the programme of Public Administration. For academic year 2022-23, 768 persons expressed interest (applied), of which 601 persons proceeded to complete their enrolment by depositing their fees. The percentage is 78.25%. The average number of applications (445) and registrations (340) in the undergraduate programmes of the University is 76.4%.

There is a limit to the number of students admitted, and in this programme the limit is 1000 places per academic year.

Tuition fees are a total of 6000 euros for the entire period of study, but there is a significant number of scholarships available (see below).

#### New Student Support

Apart from the initial emails, with basic instructions to students, the direct telephone contact of the SEPs with students, this is followed in a short period (usually the 2nd week) from the start, by Group Counselling Meetings (GCTs) in which the structure and operation of the EAP, the relevant departments and services that students can address or use during their studies are presented. The meetings held in the context of the OAs allow for more expression and the resolution of more specific issues, creating a sense of teamwork, and allowing for greater interaction. In these meetings, students get to know each other, put forward their personal motivations and ambitions, experiences and find partnerships with each other. Also, the proposed educational process, time commitments and rhythms, obligations and rights are analysed and discussed, and finally students are led to self-commit to the so-called "teaching contract", an essential component of distance education.

Students are informed by messages or announcements, using also direct e-mailing, about events organised by the School and the HOU or by initiatives of the FACs.

In addition, the HOU organizes an online welcome event for first-year students, where the Deans will present the Faculties of the Institution, followed by separate presentations of the programmes by the Directors.

#### Monitoring student progress

The structure of a module includes a specific study timetable with a set of intermediate compulsory assignments before the final examination of the students. The courses training platform (courses.eap.gr) use directly records the progress of each student and thus enables teachers to monitor it.

In addition, the professors of a subject area in frequent meetings with the Teaching Staff Team (TST) of the subject area, discuss progress issues of their students, try to achieve similar results with other departments of the same subject area, and identify and address cases of insufficient progress by groups of students or individual students.

The reports of the internal evaluation of the institution as well as the progress, examination and teaching indicators produced each year by the NAP at all levels (subject, MA, Faculty and NAP) provide important assistance at this level.

#### Student progression

- Students at the HOU have the opportunity to choose the pace of their studies according to their professional and family commitments. In this context, they have the right to choose from 1 to 3 modules per semester. In the process of registering for the examination of a module, the modules of the previous semesters must be exhausted first and then the choice of the next semester's modules is permitted. For example, if they have successfully completed (1) first semester module and wish to choose 3 modules, they must necessarily declare 2 modules from the first semester and 1 module from the second semester, and so on.
- Students who are entitled to participate in the examinations of a module and fail in these examinations (final & retake) have the right to register the module in which they failed in the next semester and participate only in the examinations. If they fail again then they take the module with full financial and educational obligations.

#### Established scholarships

According to the EAP's scholarship regulations there are internal scholarships in all of the Foundation's MAs.

The scholarships are divided into scholarships of excellence and scholarships with other criteria. Excellence scholarships in MPAs are for total exemption and are given to students who have chosen to attend the maximum number of permitted subjects (3 subjects) in the current academic semester, excluding laboratory courses, and who obtain a grade of more than 8.5 in each of them. Other criteria scholarships take into account: a) financial criteria, b) social criteria and c) academic criteria. In this case, a set of points is calculated, and a scholarship is awarded on the basis of a clearly formulated procedure set out in the relevant regulation.

For the award of a scholarship (partial or full tuition fee waiver), applicants apply every semester. In the case of excellence scholarships, full tuition fee waiver is granted for the semester; for other scholarships, the amount of tuition fee reduction is calculated on a pro rata basis according to the marks awarded to applicants per semester, in accordance with the criteria for awarding scholarships. The following table shows statistics of scholarships since the start of the Public Administration programme:

AC YEAR	EXCELLENCE SCHOLARS	AMOUNT	SOCIAL CRITERIA SCHOLARS	AMOUNT	ΜΕΙΩΣΗ 20%	ΠΟΣΟ
2018-2019	39	26.625,00	67	30.375,00	21	3.818,00
2019-2020	92	66.623,33	76	22.975,50	30	5.396,00
2020-2021	88	66.000,00	118	45.415,00	62	11.700,00

2021-2022	77	54.900,00	143	47.574,50	70	16.116,67
2022-2023	38 PERSONS IN FIRST SEMESTER ONLY	28.500,00	76 PERSONS IN FIRST SEMESTER ONLY	28.087,50	-	-

#### Student mobility - Terms and conditions - Financial support for mobility

The mobility of students, faculty members and SSC members are based on two main pillars.

On the one hand, there are the personal collaborations and participation in conferences, lectures, scientific committees, electoral bodies, as well as research collaboration and teaching in departments of other university institutions.

On the other hand, in the ERASMUS+ programme (<http://erasmusplus.eap.gr>), in which the EAP has been involved since 2004. The programme gives students the opportunity to carry out part of their studies abroad, with full academic recognition, in the framework of cooperation with European university institutions. Students can also apply for a traineeship in an institution abroad in the subject of their MSc/MSc.

It is worth noting that members of the Roma community are entitled to study at the HOU free of charge.

#### Awareness of mobility for the academic community

Information to students and staff (faculty/staff/staff) of the Institution on the ERASMUS+ programme and the calls/application periods per action is provided through:

- Telephone and electronic communication of interested parties with the ERASMUS+ Office
- by telephone or via the HOU's website (Announcements)
- ERASMUS+ website of the HOU
- Social Media (HOU and ERASMUS+)

#### Implementation of the ECTS credit transfer system

For one-semester study moves, 1 ECTS unit is assigned, for a full-year move, 2-3 ECTS units are assigned.

Each NCE is matched with a number of courses (at the respective host institution) such that it receives the number of credits it would have received at the NCE, while covering the largest percentage of the curriculum. In cases where it is not possible to match credits exactly, the Dean's Office of the Faculties (and the Steering Committee in the case of the FET) have decided to allow the matching of 2 to 4 additional credits/unit.

Course assignments are made in collaboration with the TAs' Coordinators and pre-approved by the Deaneries of the Faculties, on the basis of the signed Learning Agreement for Studies - before the Mobility.

If the pre-agreed commitments of the scholarship holders are successfully completed (as evidenced by the Transcript of Records provided by the Host Institution at the end of the mobility) then automatic final recognition (based on existing decisions of the Dean's Office of the Schools) is given for the periods of study and the TCs (with the relevant credits) are recognised as completed.

#### Diploma supplement

The Department of Student Registry (DGR) of the HOU issues to all graduates a Certificate of Analytical Grading, which indicates the courses of the MPA in which they were examined during their studies, as well as the credit points (ECTS) awarded for each course. According to the decision of the NAP's Steering Committee No. 301/30-5-2016, it was decided to automatically issue a Diploma Supplement. In addition, the Deanery of Social Sciences in its meeting No. 1/21-09-21 decided that "the Diploma Supplement is awarded to all graduates without exception along with the degree or the certificate of completion of studies".

#### Quality Standards for Diploma/Degree Theses

There is no provision for a thesis as a compulsory element of the award of a degree, and no provision for student internships in the MA.

#### Analysis of judgment

It is evident in the information above that the Institution complies with most requirements of Principle 5, namely,

- (a) Offering an adequate registration procedure of the admitted students, with all necessary documents, according to the law, and the necessary support of the newly admitted students;
- (b) setting out clearly student rights and obligations in 'teaching contracts', and detailed monitoring of student progression; some progression is also achieved by the module examination rules that oblige students not to leave behind modules of previous semesters that they failed to pass.
- (c) offering internships granting scholarships both on academic merit and a combination of academic merit and other criteria of a social or financial nature;
- (d) establishing a good procedure of award and recognition of degrees;
- (e) adequately defining the duration of studies, the conditions for progression and assurance of the progress of students in their studies;
- (f) clearly setting out the terms and conditions for enhancing student mobility, including a detailed system of recognition of periods of study abroad and credits acquired during such periods by students

However, it appears that the Institution does not require, or allow students the choice, to submit a thesis in order to fulfil their degree requirements. The Institution's report offers no explanation for this. It is strongly recommended that the Institution reconsiders this with a view to introducing a thesis requirement for the final degree award, in the absence of compelling reasons not to do so.

## Conclusions

The good practice of the Institution in matters of Student Admission, Progression, Recognition of Academic Qualifications and Award of Degrees and Certificates of Competence, augurs well for the future success of the new undergraduate degree programme in Public Administration. The introduction of a thesis in the final assessment for the degree would further improve its quality.

Given that the Open University degrees are recognised by law as equivalent to degrees of other Public Universities in Greece and given that admission to all other Public Universities is through a National Competitive Examination, with restricted entrance, Open Universality degrees appear to offer the opportunity of a fully recognised University qualification after admission without selection and National competitive examination. This qualification offers the same advantages of career progression to Civil Servants, for example, as the traditional Public University qualifications that are subject to strict admission tests and could be seen as violating the principle of equality enshrined in the Constitution of the Greek Republic. This issue is, however, outside our brief, and we only wish to mention it here without further comment.

## Panel Judgement

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

## Panel Recommendations

It is recommended that the Institution considers introducing a thesis requirement for the final degree award.

## **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**

#### **Findings**

The teaching staff of the HOU is divided into permanent Faculty -Research Teaching Staff (RTS) of the Institution and Adjunct Teaching Staff (ATS) of limited duration. There are 3 faculty members from the Faculty of Social Sciences on the Study programme of Public Administration and 170 ATS members.

The Institution reports laconically that the selection of RTS faculty is made according to relevant legislation in force. For the selection of ATS Faculty, the Institution advertises every three years positions for one-year employment as an ATS member with the possibility of renewal for three consecutive years. In the call for applications, prospective members are invited to fill in an application form and detailed forms with teaching, research and professional experience and other information specified in the call (see example <https://www.eap.gr/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/prokirixi-sep-2021-2024-ada.pdf>).

The selection of ATSSs is made on a merit-based and transparent basis according to the selection criteria as shown in the accompanying forms of the call. Special mention should be made of the fact that the criteria include the results of the evaluation of ATSSs by students and their Coordinators in previous year(s) that they might have worked with the programme.

**Practices for attracting high level academic staff members:** Both the Institution and the Programme of Studies organise or participate in scientific workshops, presentations and other research activities, led by candidates. In this context, they invite both the general public and scientists and/or distinguished scholars. Moreover, the existence of the EAP in the Greek academic space has been an attraction in itself, as it provides the opportunity for additional funding for faculty members of other institutions through their work as EAP faculty members, as well as the opportunity/challenge for a professor to work in an educational model, different from the traditional educational model that is common in our country.

On teaching load, the Institution reports that there is no system for collecting information. This is unfortunate and we will comment further on it below in our judgement.

In distance education the teaching workload is divided into:

- Group Advisory Meetings (GAM) with students for discussion-guidance-review of the material (at least 3 times/academic semester with a duration of four (4) hours at a time).
- Communication with students outside the GAM for question resolution, systematic support and encouragement, etc. in a class of about 20-30 students.
- Preparing assignments and updating digital learning space.
- Supporting students in the preparation of assignments and throughout their study schedule (14 weeks).
- Proofreading of assignments and individualized feedback to each student.

In addition to the above student support tasks, the teaching member, based on the contract signed with the HOU, is required to perform a number of time-consuming tasks such as: critical reading of educational material, updating the digital space of the department, participation in the work of the Teaching Staff Group of the department, writing reports for the Coordinator of the department, participation in training courses on open and distance education, participation in internal evaluation procedures, participation in the extraction of examination topics.

It should be noted that, the number of students in a class also influences the workload of the ATS. This also substantiates the salary differentiation that ATSSs have among themselves (depending on the number of students). (The link <https://www.eap.gr/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/kanonismos-ypoxreoseon-sep.pdf> in section A1.1a "Duties/Contractual Obligations of an ACE Member" describes in detail the duties and contractual obligations of ACE members).

**Procedure for the evaluation of lecturers by students**

Current evaluation focuses on the lecturers, the organisation of subject modules, the educational material published by the HOU, the logistical infrastructure and the administrative

services. The largest and most important part of the evaluation takes place electronically via the internet and the data is then fed into an algorithm for calculating the average level per module. The results obtained form the basis on which statistical and qualitative analyses are carried out with the ultimate aim of creating useful information on the quality of the educational process, from the level of the class -group, in a thematic unit, to the overall evaluation of a Programme of Studies, the School and the whole HOU.

In the online evaluation, students as well as the coordinators of the modules (only for the evaluation of the lecturers in the modules they coordinate) have the right of evaluation. Evaluation by students is done by filling in a questionnaire using one of the usual web browsers. The electronic system fully ensures the anonymity of the participants. The questionnaire completed by the students has evaluation questions divided into thematic categories. More specifically, for the evaluation of teachers the main evaluation axes are:

- Evaluation of the teacher in terms of communication outside the Group Counselling Meetings (GCMs).
- Evaluation of the teacher during the GCMs.
- Evaluation of the teacher with regard to the correction of written assignments.

The evaluation is annual and is carried out before the start of the final examinations. The internal evaluation is completed with the creation of the annual evaluation report which includes statistical and qualitative analyses on the data of the e-evaluation system. This report contains both detailed and aggregated and comparative assessment data for each class, curriculum, deanery and for the whole HOU. In addition, each faculty member is provided with the opportunity to be informed about the evaluation given to him/her by students and coordinators for knowledge and improvement of the overall performance in the educational process.

Both the online evaluation and the report generation are ISO certified processes in the internal ISO certification system of the HOU.

The unit responsible for faculty evaluation is the HOU's Internal Evaluation and Training Unit (IEU - <http://meae.eap.gr/>) whose website contains detailed information on the evaluation activities it carries out.

Ways in which students can make use of the results of the evaluation of teaching staff.

The evaluation results are first of all provided to the evaluatees for their knowledge and self-improvement. The Institution, in turn, takes them into account when evaluating the teaching candidates (in the context of renewing its cooperation with them). Finally, special reports with extreme evaluations, aggregated evaluation data, evaluation history, etc. are generated and delivered to the Director of each MA as well as to the faculties and the Steering Committee (SC) for further study. In this way, problematic situations related to Teaching are identified and appropriately addressed through similar decisions taken by the IC of the NAP. For example, as of the 2016-2017 academic year, it was decided that an ATS member with a student evaluation grade in two consecutive teaching periods (annual or semester) below 3 out of 5 will not have his/her contract renewed for the new semester or year. The Institution will consider replacing printed teaching materials based on low student and faculty evaluations.

All the above, however, seems to apply only to ATS staff. There is no information on the evaluation of RTS (permanent) Faculty.

#### Strategy on the mobility of members of the academic unit

The mobility of students, faculty members is based on two main axes. On the one hand, personal collaborations and participation in conferences, lectures, scientific committees, electoral bodies, as well as research collaboration and teaching in departments of other university institutions. On the other hand, in the ERASMUS+ programme (<http://erasmusplus.eap.gr>), in which the HOU has been involved since 2004. The programme also gives the opportunity for faculty/staff members to teach or train (and for administrative staff members to train) in the context of cooperation with European university institutions. Each School supports the whole mobility process as far as possible (provision of study permits, etc.). Participants in the ERASMUS+ programme are eligible for a scholarship. In the case of scholarship holders from groups with fewer opportunities, additional funding is provided.

Establishment of teaching awards; The university regulations do not currently provide for teaching fellowships/awards.

Academic unit strategy for research activities in specific fields of scientific interest: the research policy of the School is expressed through the objectives, which are:

- conducting high quality research in the fields of Social Sciences in which it operates, disseminating its results and integrating them into the educational process.
- the cultivation and exploitation of international collaborations for research purposes.

The monitoring of the research policy is carried out through statistical data collected by the MEAE, through the annual evaluation reports which are discussed at a meeting of the Dean's Office as well as the BoD, shortly before the end of each academic year. The evaluation of the research path of the School is carried out annually in the internal reports. Institutional Incentives o to conduct research include:

- an annual grant per faculty member for participation in scientific conferences of 1000 euros for a national conference and 2000 euros for an international conference.
- the establishment of a framework for the support of research, in accordance with the decision of the Steering Committee of the HOU No 506/26-02-21, for the funding of research proposals of HOU faculty members for a period of 3 years. The amount of funding available is 20.000€ per faculty member per year, i.e., total funding per research project up to 60.000€ for the three-year period. A prerequisite is the participation in the Project Team (PI) of a fellow, who can be either a Doctoral Candidate (PD) or a Postdoctoral Researcher (PD).

For the dissemination of research results, faculty members participate in scientific networks (research-gate, LinkedIn, etc.), through which they keep their affiliated users informed. The HOU's institutional repository also contributes to this direction. Dissemination to the Greek and international academic and scientific community is achieved through scientific publications and talks, workshops, conferences, as well as through the circulation of the School's bulletin and newsletter. Faculty and faculty members are obliged by their professional relationship with the university to indicate their status in their research paper. In addition,

Faculty members are assessed for the impact factor of their research work. Regular re-evaluation leads to continuous improvement.

### **Analysis of judgment**

The new study programme in Public Administration benefits from an overall sound Institutional strategy regarding the recruitment and performance monitoring of academic staff.

However, there are issues of concern in this strategy, namely:

-The disproportionately large number of ATS temporary employees, vs RTS, permanent employees. There are only three RTS employees on the new study programme, with over 170 temporary employees. This entails risks for the medium- and long-term development of the programme and the uniformity of quality in its delivery, as well as the academic standing of the programme and the Institution.

-There is no evidence of a strategy to allow recruitment at International level, of Greek speaking candidates from Universities abroad.

-More important, there is no strategy for internationalisation of the curriculum to allow instruction in English or other major languages. This would greatly improve quality and competitiveness of the Greek Open University, both nationally and internationally.

-No details have been provided on the recruitment and performance monitoring of permanent academic Staff (RTS), with only a brief statement that such recruitment is done according to current legislation. It must be assumed that the picture here is similar to that in other Greek Universities, which have attracted criticisms for lack of transparency and lack of strategies to attract talent from outside the recruiting University, both in Greece and Internationally. An opportunity missed for a young and forward-looking Institution.

On the positive side, the new study programme in Public Administration will benefit from a moderately generous provision of financial assistance for attending scientific conferences available to permanent (but not temporary) academic Staff, and existing and planned measures to encourage research and publications. However, there appears to be an emphasis on monitoring the research primarily of temporary staff (ATS), for whom research appears to be important for their retention by the Institution and the renewal of their contract. We are told very little about a continuous research assessment of permanent Faculty (RTS). It is obvious that given the mobility of temporary Staff and their affiliation to other Institutions, substantial high-quality research by permanent Staff is vital for the survival of the programme and the Institution.

### **Conclusions**

The Institution needs to address the issues of concern listed above in order to be fully compliant with Principle 6. Most of these are issues of common concern to all Greek

universities, old and new, and the Greek Open University is invited to take a lead in addressing them.

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

- Substantial high-quality research by permanent Staff is vital for the survival of the programme and the Institution and needs to be encouraged and properly monitored.
- The disproportionately large number of ATS temporary employees, vs RTS permanent employees needs to be addressed.
- The Institution must develop a strategy to allow recruitment at international level, including quality Greek speaking candidates from Universities abroad.
- A longer-term strategy for internationalisation of the curriculum to allow instruction in English or other major languages would improve the quality of recruited staff.
- Recruitment of permanent Faculty (RTS) must increase, and must be done with transparent open procedures, to attract best talent and avoid stagnant conditions in other Greek Universities.

## Principle7: 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

#### Findings

At the Hellenic Open University (HOU), the infrastructure and services for student learning and support are primarily centralized and therefore the coverage offered by the institution is horizontal. The financial resources of the Institution come from student fees, from competitive national and/or international development and/or research programmes. In terms of building facilities, the new program uses privately owned (by the HOU) or rented rooms for meetings. Most of the rooms largely meet the teaching requirements (quality of space, capacity, room equipment, seating, tables, projector, computer) and, in any case, meet the standards set centrally by the university. ICT technologies are also used to a considerable extent by the new program. In particular, the new program is mainly supported by the online courses platform (courses.eap.gr) where the student can enter and carry out all his/her activities, from studying educational material to submitting an assignment or being informed about the results of

his/her assessment by the professor. Since 2016-2017, the HOU supports the organization of videoconferences, instead of face-to-face meetings, using software (skype for business, Webex). A large part of the educational material is in electronic format, in the form of video lectures, online exercises, presentations, collections of exercises and available through the educational portal of the university. In addition, there is extensive use of asynchronous discussion spaces for question resolution and discussion on assignments and synchronous teleconference spaces for discussion or delivery of material. In some subjects, automatically graded multiple-choice questions are used through the HOU's educational portal. Communication between students and the lecturer is carried out using ICT at a rate of about 100% and includes modern teleconferencing facilities. In addition to the available educational material described above, in each subject area students are offered relevant bibliography, which the student can access through the interlibrary loan service of printed material or through the electronic resources of the University library (<http://lib.eap.gr>).

Means available to the IMS to support learning and academic activity (human resources, infrastructure, services, etc.) and the promotion of research.

In terms of student support services, the HOU - and consequently the new program - has the following horizontal services at its disposal:

- Student Services Office ([info@eap.gr](mailto:info@eap.gr)) : With the Student Services Office for information on the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes offered by the Greek Open University and the calls for expressions of interest in these programmes.
- 24-hour problem solving and clarification service Chatbot ([chatbot@eap.gr](mailto:chatbot@eap.gr)). The Chatbot service on the HOU's website and digital education space is designed to provide immediate assistance at times when the University's administrative services are not working. Through this service, students, lecturers, and visitors can easily obtain answers to technical and administrative questions and clarifications, in order to speed up the processing of requests and the resolution of queries.
- Student Service Centre (Student Registry Department): The Student Registry Department is responsible for dealing with all student matters, such as student registration/re-registration, the designation of departments, updating the electronic register, the announcement of grades, the procedures for issuing degrees, the issuing of certificates and copies of diplomas. It also handles all the necessary correspondence with students.
- Office of Liaison, Innovation and Entrepreneurship (<http://career.eap.gr/>): The main mission of the Liaison, Innovation and Entrepreneurship Office of the HOU is to connect HOU students and graduates with the labour market, based on networking and cooperation with economic and social institutions, and on providing comprehensive guidance and information on career and lifelong learning issues, with particular attention to vulnerable social groups, and to remove the difficulties of their integration into the labour market and the lifelong learning society. The mission of the office is: (a) To support the integration of students and graduates in the labour market, through the provision of counselling and guidance in making decisions concerning their professional rehabilitation and/or educational or academic development. (b) The development of networking and cooperation with the academic and vocational education and training institutions in the field of education and training. (c) The monitoring of the

graduates' progress with systematic recording of labour market data, which are taken into account by the EAP administration and the HEAE in order to link the education provided with the labour market. (d) The development and cultivation of the entrepreneurial culture and mentality of the students and graduates of the HOU, through targeted actions and activities, with the aim of networking with the innovative entrepreneurial ecosystem.

- Mobility Office - Erasmus (<https://erasmusplus.eap.gr/>)

The Mobility - Erasmus Office is responsible for the management of mobility issues for students as well as faculty and staff members of the HOU based on two main axes: On the one hand, personal collaborations and participation in conferences, lectures, scientific committees, electoral bodies as well as research collaboration (with) and teaching in departments of other university institutions. On the other hand, in the Erasmus/Erasmus+ programme (<http://erasmusplus.eap.gr>), in which the HOU has been involved since 2004.

- Department of Facilities and Project Management

This department draws up the programme of Group Counselling Meetings (GCMs) and written examinations. It also schedules and organizes the oral examinations in case it receives approved requests from the Student Registry Department. At the same time, it is responsible for the operation and development of the information and telecommunications networks and the technical support of computer users.

- HOU Library and Information Centre (<http://www.eap.gr/lib/>).

The aim of the HOU Distance Library and Information Centre is to provide continuous support to members of the academic community in their educational and research work. For this reason, the Library has a wealth of printed material -more than 32,000 titles- related to the cognitive subjects of the HOU, which can be searched through the Electronic Catalogue of the Library, but can also be picked up directly at the place of residence through the simple procedure of completing an electronic loan request (Printed Book Loan Service). The Library has also developed partnerships with other Academic Institutions that allow access to their collections (Interlibrary Loan Service). In addition, a number of authoritative scientific electronic resources such as Databases, E-books, E-journals, Electronic Journals, Subject Portals, Branch Studies, Repository and Heal-Link Resources are available, which can be accessed through the Library's website with the personal codes issued by the NAP for digital education services. The Institutional Repository includes theses and dissertations, Alternative Teaching Materials and anything that is the intellectual output of the Institution. Library staff provide ongoing guidance and support in searching for resources and utilizing resources through: Distance or On-site Seminars and Guides, Inquiry Form (Ask Us Service...), information leaflets, and through extended hours (Monday-Friday: 7.45-19.15, Saturday and Sunday: 10.15-15.45). In addition to these services, which are briefly presented in the Guide "Presentation of Library Services", the Library has in its new comfortable spaces with modern infrastructure and equipment. In addition, since January 2018, the Library has a branch in Athens (Gravia 4-6, P.O. Box 106 78) to support the creation there of an active student community.

Contact with Teachers: During the semester, students can consult with the faculty member of their department. The way in which they can contact each instructor can be primarily by e-

mail and secondarily by telephone. The ATS member shall determine after consultation with the students, times for contacting them, which in total should be three hours per week (e.g., every Tuesday 6-9 pm). He/she will also provide his/her e-mail address, which students can use whenever they wish, as it is undoubtedly the most effective means of communication. Regular communication with the faculty member helps significantly in the study, but also enables him/her to understand any difficulties the students are facing, so that he/she can advise, guide, and generally support them more effectively.

#### Support and administrative staff

Most of the staff in the HOU services have years of experience in their field and regularly participate in workshops, briefings, and training courses.

- The permanent and indefinite contract staff of the NAP has the opportunity to participate in certified training programmes organised by the National Centre for Public Administration and Self-Government (NCCPA).
- All the staff of the Institution (permanent or contracted) can, by decision of the Administration, enrol and attend without financial charge the HOU's programmes of study (undergraduate, postgraduate, doctoral). As an indication, since 2000, when this practice was adopted, employees have enrolled in 227-degree programmes (undergraduate and postgraduate), approximately 100 employees are currently attending this academic year, while 61 employees have completed their studies to date.
- Specialised training is provided to all staff depending on their field of employment e.g., Department of Economic Affairs, Special Account for Research Funds and Research (SRA).

A reward scheme for administrative staff was introduced for the first time in 2022, within the Staff Rewards Framework.

#### Analysis of Judgment

The Institution's report paints a healthy picture of the state of learning resources and student support for the new undergraduate program. Highlights are all the teaching resources online, the online inter-library loan facility, the provision of ample time and means of communication of students with their teachers, the two Library buildings in Patra and in Athens allowing students to come physically together (which should be followed by similar buildings in other major hub Cities in Greece, such as Thessaloniki). Support and administration staff appears to be qualified and to use opportunities to develop their competences, such as enrolling for a HOU degree online.

The new undergraduate program depends heavily on existing Institutional resources and needs to develop in the future newer resources in the fields taught for the first time, on a planned and long-term basis, and also continue to strengthen support and counselling services. When allocating the available resources, the needs of all students must be taken into consideration, especially students with disabilities. We did not have enough information on this in the Institution's report.

Finally, as also noted in other parts of this report, it is vital that learning materials are regularly updated, and that important materials in languages other than Greek are made available to students who need them.

## **Conclusions**

Our impression after two days of online meetings and reading the Institution's report is of a new study programme introduced with great enthusiasm and considerable competence and skill by its creator and Director, which has gone off to a good start, with a drop-out rate half of the University's average drop-out rate. The new undergraduate programme of Public Administration has every opportunity to be a long-running and successful programme and contribute to the quality of Government in the country, if the concerns expressed above and other parts of this report are addressed.

## **Panel Judgement**

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

## **Panel Recommendations**

- The new undergraduate program depends heavily on existing Institutional resources and needs to develop in the future new resources in the fields taught for the first time, on a planned and long-term basis.
- When allocating the available resources, the needs of all students must be taken into consideration, especially students with disabilities.
- More Library buildings allowing students to come physically together should be opened in other major hub Cities in Greece, such as Thessaloniki.
- The Institution must ensure that learning materials are regularly updated, and that important materials in languages other than Greek are made available to students who need them and can use them.

## 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**

#### **Findings**

Based on the relevant documentation submitted and the information collected from the interviews of the various stakeholders, the Panel found the following:

- The HOU maintains all necessary relevant data to support its educational process, from the students' registration (which is done electronically) to their graduation.
- Furthermore, the HOU has a computer system that keeps track of all staff information, teaching and administrative personnel data, and the mechanism for providing training (using websites like [courses.eap.gr](http://courses.eap.gr), [study.eap.gr](http://study.eap.gr), etc.).
- All procedures offered for information gathering and processing have been recognized as processes in the ISO 9001 quality assurance system. Additionally, personal data is collected and processed in accordance with the new European data protection regulation.
- Facilities, MEAE, MODIP, Student Registry, Personnel, EEHEM, and other departments/units are the main entities handling such data.
- Every semester, the MEAE information system offers evaluation forms to faculty as well as a special questionnaire to students in order to almost automatically assess the needs of all the factors involved in the educational process. For this purpose, specialized software has been developed that enables the execution of evaluations, the analysis of results, and the production of pertinent reports.

- Additionally, in order to generate a set of reports, specialized statistical programming software (MATLAB, SPSS, etc.) collects and processes the student register, examination data, as well as the data of the courses attended by the students.

## Analysis

Based on the aforementioned findings and the feedback received from both the internal and the external stakeholders the following analysis is presented:

- A report (electronic or printed) containing the findings of the information processing is provided. The Coordinators and the Director of the program are just two entities who have access to these reports. The analysis of results generates topics for discussion in academic forums and ideas for improving particular procedures.
- The Coordinators, the Program Directors, Deans, and Governing Committee are the first groups to receive the results of the student evaluations of the instructors, followed by the instructors themselves. When there is a serious issue with any instructor, the relevant Coordinators look into any special assessment cases that require their attention first.
- The collection, analysis, and use of the information collected from all the stakeholders, namely, students and faculty, are systematically provided to the quality assurance unit.

## Conclusions

- It is worth mentioning that the quality assurance unit provides feedback to the relevant bodies via the various channels of communication within the HOU.
- There is no evidence of assessment of the administrative staff.
- There is no evidence of input/feedback provided by external stakeholders for curriculum development.

## Panel Judgement

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

## **Panel Recommendations**

- Institutionalize the performance appraisal of the administrative staff by the students and faculty.
- Develop a mechanism where external stakeholders, i.e., employers, student alumni association, social groups, etc. provide feedback and input for the development of new courses and or programs.

## 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

#### Findings

The university's website provides all the necessary information that a student/prospective student needs regarding the Public Administration undergraduate program.

#### Analysis

Specifically, the information that can be found includes the program's objectives and description, learning outcomes, admission prerequisites, curriculum structure, faculty profiles, financial obligations and contact details. The website is available in both Greek and English and provides additional accessibility tools.

Moreover, the website serves as a central platform for accessing all the necessary regulations, as well as the quality policy, program objectives, and the four-year operational plan for the Public Administration program.

The Public Administration study program utilizes various communication channels, such as social media, website, LMS, and web radio, to effectively promote its activities and keep individuals with an interest in the program well-informed.

It is important to mention that the website offers an "online chat" application to provide prompt assistance to visitors seeking information or support.

Additionally, the HOU publishes the electronic newspaper Open2U, which contains information about all the study programs of the HOU. For example, inauguration ceremonies: <https://www.eap.gr/wp-content/uploads/2023/02/OPEN-2U-JANUARY/>

On the main page of the HOU, information about all study programs is posted. For example, the announcement on the HOU main page of the Symposium organized by the Association of Students of the PA programme (26/2/22). The actions of the HOU's Career Office concern both students and graduates of all study programs.

In the forum operating on the educational platform of the UGP in Public Administration and Digital Governance (courses), specific information is posted about the PA programme. Therefore, the PA programme does not publish a separate newsletter but utilizes the electronic services and social networks of the Institution to inform its students and graduates (e.g., welcoming new students at the School of Social Sciences).

Furthermore, it should be noted that the page dedicated to the Public Administration undergraduate program is integrated within the university's main website and is closely aligned with the institution's policies and guidelines.

## **Conclusions**

The website is user-friendly, well maintained, and informative.

## **Panel Judgement**

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

## **Panel Recommendations**

Maintain the user-friendly nature of the web site and be proactive in making any improvements in the future.

## 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

### Findings

The Internal Quality Assurance System (ESDP) of the HOU is in charge of the internal evaluation processes carried out at the level of the University, Schools, and Study Programmes.

The Internal Assessment and Training Unit (IAE) is the first of the units that cooperate and carry out actions for the operation of the ESDP of the HOU; the second one is the Strategic Planning and Development Office and the third one is the HOU's Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP).

The Annual Reports Evaluation of the Schools, which includes aggregated data for the study programmes, educational and research work, as well as for other services that are offered by the Schools during one academic year (two consecutive - fall and spring - semesters), concludes the annual internal evaluation of the Schools conducted by the OMEA of each School.

Information is gathered by MEAE's information systems, which are linked to the Student Register database. MEAE generates the requested reporting reports by automatically extracting the data.

The Unit of Internal Evaluation and Training (MEAE) of the HOU conducts the internal evaluation of the program under study concurrently (and additionally). The evaluation's focus is on the instructors, the way thematic units are organized, the educational materials provided by the HOU, and the infrastructure services for logistics and administration.

Students evaluate the course by filling out a questionnaire on one of the common Internet browsers (such as Internet Explorer, Firefox, etc.).

In the internal ISO certification system of HOU, both electronic assessment and reporting are certified ISO processes.

## **Analysis**

The biggest and most significant portion of the evaluation is conducted online via the internet, and the data is then used to calculate the average level for each target module using an algorithm.

The electronic system completely ensures the participants' anonymity while simultaneously resolving a number of issues, such as the influence of classroom teachers on students, the inability to verify the validity of the files containing completed questionnaires.

The outcomes serve as the foundation for statistical and qualitative analyses with the ultimate goal of producing information that can be used to improve the educational process, from class-group level up to the overall evaluation of one Study Program, of the Dean's Office, and of the entire HOU.

Additionally, during the evaluation, it is possible to make observations and comments for the general improvement and expansion of the evaluation process as well as the system's current functionality.

Given that technical and administrative services are rated significantly lower by students than teaching, it may be worthwhile to establish and monitor performance indicators for these services with quantifiable outcomes and create improvement plans for them. A ticketing system would assist in gathering information about the efficiency of these services, identifying their shortcomings and offering solutions.

## **Conclusions**

There are many mechanisms that ensure the quality of the program, and the analysis of data is conducted in a very professional, efficient and effective manner.

However, the absence of external stakeholders and students, in the quality assurance process, create a pathology that requires immediate attention.

The Panel has not detected any success stories of corrective actions taken at the administrative and/or the academic front.

### **Panel Judgement**

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

### **Panel Recommendations**

- Continue to use the Internal Quality Assurance System.
- The results of the quality assurance process must be communicated, including executive summaries of the findings, and transform them into mission statements to strengthen the institution's adoption of a culture of quality assurance.
- Given that technical and administrative services are rated significantly lower by students than teaching, it may be worthwhile to establish and monitor performance indicators for these services with quantifiable outcomes and create improvement plans for them. A ticketing system would assist in gathering information about the efficiency of these services, identifying their shortcomings and offering solutions.
- Be more closely connected to action plans at regular intervals given the impressive production of volumes of different statistical data.
- External stakeholders, such as the business community, the alumni association of HOU and other social groups with which the university interacts, may provide information on HOU's quality.
- Include input from students in the decision-making process.
- In the quality assurance process, for instance, give course credit for engagement (with deliverables, such as a report from the student's point of view). This will encourage students to participate.
- HOU should publish "success stories" of corrective or improving actions taken.

## 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

### Findings

This is the first time that the undergraduate programme on Public Administration (DHD) of the Hellenic Open University is being evaluated.

The Institution underwent two previous evaluations. The first External Evaluation took place from June 27th to July 1st, 2016, and the final evaluation report was received on July 20th, 2018. The initial Institution Progress Report was submitted on March 30th, 2020. The updated Institution Progress Report, taking into account the recommendations utilized by the certified Quality Assurance Unit, was submitted on July 21st, 2022.

The External Evaluation of the Internal Quality Assurance System of HOU was conducted from November 23rd to November 28th, 2020, and the External Evaluation Report was received on March 3rd, 2021. The initial IQAS Progress Report, with reference to the recommendations utilized by the certified Quality Assurance Unit, was submitted on July 21st, 2022.

In the first evaluation, the institution was assessed for the following aspects: educational material, participation in mobility programs, communication between students and professors, spirit of collaboration among the faculty members, development of new Study Programs, mechanism for rewarding students and professors, number of permanent faculty positions and program leadership by faculty members.

In the second evaluation, the institution was assessed for the following aspects: use the Internal Quality Assurance System, adoption of quality assurance culture by every member of the institution, establishment and monitoring of performance indicators for administrative services, guidelines and criteria for plagiarism, maintenance of student-to-faculty ratio, the disproportionately large number of adjunct employees compared to the number of faculty members, improvement plan for low performing personnel, guidelines for faculty and staff members regarding how to promote the research reputation of the HOU, website update, publicity of faculty and student research, publicity to collaborative projects with outside stakeholders, establishment of career office and formation of an advisory committee for institution's strategic planning.

### **Analysis**

Despite the fact that this is the first time it is being evaluated, the department has established a process for utilizing the recommendations of the external evaluation. Specifically, after receiving the external evaluation and certification report of the PA programme, the Internal Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP), in collaboration with the academic unit (Program Director and Council), studies the External Evaluation and Certification Report to decide on the adoption of some or all of the recommendations of the External Evaluation and Certification Committee and the development of the Action Plan.

The approved Action Plan of the PA programme, which is approved by the Council of the School, records the actions that will be carried out using the necessary resources and will contribute to achieving improvements and addressing the weaknesses identified by the External Evaluation and Certification Report.

The approved Action Plan of the PA programme is sent to MODIP for the necessary actions within the framework of the internal evaluation of the PA programme.

After two years from the date of certification, the academic unit (Director, Council) assesses the actions that have been carried out, the progress made in implementing the Action Plan, and prepares the "Results Monitoring Table".

The "Results Monitoring Table" reflects the achieved results, the degree of achievement, and the actions taken to comply with the recommendations of the external evaluation and certification.

After finalizing the Monitoring Report through collaboration between MODIP and the academic unit (where required), it is sent to the Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (HAHE) by MODIP and published on the Foundation's website as a supporting document of the External Evaluation and Certification Report of the DHD.

## Conclusions

Based on previous evaluations, significant changes and improvements have been made in the Institution. Regarding the current evaluation, the EEAP expects to confirm that the expected procedures will be followed until the reassessment takes place.

## Panel Judgement

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

## Panel Recommendations

Continue the current processes of evaluation and accreditation.

## 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

#### NOT APPLICABLE FOR THIS EVALUATION

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

N/A

## PART C: CONCLUSIONS

### I. Features of Good Practice

- There are many mechanisms that ensure the quality of the program, and the analysis of data is conducted in a very professional, efficient and effective manner.
- The Internal Quality Assurance System (ESDP) of the HOU is in charge of the internal evaluation processes carried out at the level of the University, Schools, and Study Programs and the unit is operating well.
- The PA program took into account the need for university education to contribute to society in a continuous and long-term manner.
- The HOU maintains all necessary relevant data to support its educational process, from the students' registration (which is done electronically) to their graduation.
- The website is user-friendly, well maintained and informative.
- The HOU is offering an adequate registration procedure of the admitted students, with all necessary documents, according to the law, and the necessary support of the newly admitted students;
- The HOU charter is setting out clearly student rights and obligations in 'teaching contracts', and detailed monitoring of student progression; some progression is also achieved by the module examination rules that oblige students not to leave behind modules of previous semesters that they failed to pass.
- The HOU is offering internships granting scholarships both on academic merit and a combination of academic merit and other criteria of a social or financial nature;
- Study for members of the Roma community is free, a major step to ensure equality of educational opportunity to socially underprivileged ethnic minorities, which must be commended.
- The HOU has established a good procedure of award and recognition of degrees;
- The HOU rules are adequately defining the duration of studies, the conditions for progression and assurance of the progress of students in their studies;
- The HOU rules are clearly setting out the terms and conditions for enhancing student mobility, including a detailed system of recognition of periods of study abroad and credits acquired during such periods by students.
- The new study programme in Public Administration benefits from an overall sound Institutional strategy regarding the recruitment and performance monitoring of academic staff.
- The study programme in Public Administration will benefit from a moderately generous provision of financial assistance for attending scientific conferences available to permanent (but not temporary) academic Staff, and existing and planned measures to encourage research and publications.
- The Institution's report paints a healthy picture of the state of learning resources and student support for the new undergraduate program. Highlights are all the teaching resources online, the online inter-library loan facility, the provision of

ample time and means of communication of students with their teachers, the two Library buildings in Patra and in Athens allowing students to come physically together (which should be followed by similar buildings in other major hub Cities in Greece, such as Thessaloniki).

- Support and administration staff appears to be qualified and to use opportunities to develop their competences, such as enrolling for a HOU degree online.

## II. Areas of Weakness

- The number of permanent Faculty members is limited.
- The overall strategic plan should be more realistic especially when it comes to the deadlines for the SMART objectives.
- Limited number of international faculty and students.
- Absence of elective courses.
- A more rigorous and thorough analysis of the external environment.
- The absence of various external stakeholders and of the students, in the quality assurance process, create a pathology that requires immediate attention.
- The introduction of a thesis in the final assessment for the degree would further improve its quality.
- The disproportionately large number of ATS temporary employees, vs RTS, permanent employees. There are only three RTS employees on the new study programme, with over 170 temporary employees. This entails risks for the medium- and long-term development of the programme and the uniformity of quality in its delivery, as well as the academic standing of the programme and the Institution.
- There is no evidence of a strategy to allow recruitment at International level, of Greek speaking candidates from Universities abroad.
- More important, there is no strategy for internationalisation of the curriculum to allow instruction in English or other major languages. This would greatly improve quality and competitiveness of the Greek Open University, both nationally and internationally.
- No details have been provided on the recruitment and performance monitoring of permanent academic Staff (RTS), with only a brief statement that such recruitment is done according to current legislation. It must be assumed that the picture here is similar to that in other Greek Universities, which have attracted criticisms for lack of transparency and lack of strategies to attract talent from outside the recruiting University, both in Greece and Internationally. An opportunity missed for a young and forward-looking Institution.
- There appears to be an emphasis on monitoring the research primarily of temporary staff (ATS), for whom research appears to be important for their retention by the Institution and the renewal of their contract. We are told very little about a continuous research assessment of permanent Faculty (RTS). It is obvious that given the mobility of temporary Staff and their affiliation to other Institutions, substantial high-quality research by permanent Staff is vital for the survival of the programme and the Institution.

- It is vital that learning materials are regularly updated, and that important materials in languages other than Greek are made available to students who need them.
- The new undergraduate program depends heavily on existing Institutional resources and needs to develop in the future newer resources in the fields taught for the first time, on a planned and long-term basis, and also continue to strengthen support and counselling services.
- When allocating the available resources, the needs of all students must be taken into consideration, especially students with disabilities. We did not have enough information on this in the Institution's report.

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

#### **Principle 1:**

The Institution must ensure the viability, sustainability, and strategic positioning of the programme, hiring more permanent faculty and administrative staff. Furthermore, an aggressive marketing strategy should be adopted to draw in more faculty and students from abroad.

For the efficient and effective implementation of the SMART objectives, more realistic deadlines should be set, and a thorough PESTEL analysis ought to be carried out to give the institution, faculty, and programme a more accurate and comprehensive understanding of the external environment. Finally, establishing an advisory board with members from internal and external stakeholders who will offer the institution high-level advice on its strategic planning on an annual and/or long-term basis may be beneficial.

#### **Principle 2:**

The Panel recommends the establishment of procedures guaranteeing the quality of the programme with objective appointment criteria of the Administrative Committee and the increase of permanent Staff with a rigorous and transparent procedure and objective criteria of recruitment. The Institution must review its lists of strategic goals with a view to consolidating them in the light of current global issues, and publicize more widely its quality targets.

#### **Principle 3:**

The Panel recommends the rational restructuring and internationalization of the curriculum, as detailed in this report under Principle 3 recommendations, and transparency in the appointment procedure of the teaching staff.

#### **Principle 4:**

The Panel recommends a more elaborate design of the evaluation questionnaires with the involvement of students, which should include questions about the students' own workload during the term and their preparation of the final exam, and the monitoring by the Institution of Staff compliance with students' suggestions, addressing critical comments in the evaluations. Previous training of the tutors in teaching methods for distance learning should become a recruitment prerequisite.

**Principle 5:**

The introduction of a thesis would greatly improve the quality of the final degree award.

**Principle 6:**

The Institution should introduce mechanisms of monitoring and encouraging high quality research by permanent Staff, increasing, at the same time, the number of permanent staff, currently very low compared to the number of temporary Staff, with transparent open procedures, to avoid stagnant conditions existing in other Greek Universities. In recruiting Staff, both permanent and temporary, candidates should be sought Internationally, including Greek speaking scholars from universities abroad. This should be combined with an Internationalisation of the curriculum to include teaching and publishing in English or other major languages.

**Principle 7:**

New educational resources must be created in the future in fields taught for the first time in the new Undergraduate programme under review, on a planned, long-term basis, taking into consideration students with special needs and social conditions. It would be beneficial to students to increase the number of Library buildings to include one in Thessaloniki and other hub cities, in the Greek mainland and, in particular, in the islands. Very important also is to ensure that teaching materials are up to date, and develop teaching aids in languages other than Greek to attract International students from neighbouring countries and beyond.

**Principle 8:**

The Institution must introduce a regular evaluation of administrative Staff by students, and create a mechanism for external stakeholders to provide feedback and input for the development of new courses or programmes, such as employers, student alumni associations, social groups, and so on.

**Principle 9:**

The Institution must ensure that its website retains its user-friendly nature and must take a proactive approach to implementing future enhancements.

**Principle 10:**

The Institution must strengthen its quality assurance culture. The results of the quality assurance process, including executive summaries of the findings, must be communicated and transformed into mission statements. Furthermore, since technical and administrative services are rated significantly lower by students than teaching, it may be worthwhile to establish, monitor, and create improvement plans for these services' performance indicators. A ticketing system would help in gathering data regarding the effectiveness of these services, spotting their flaws, and providing solutions.

**Principle 11:**

The Institution should maintain its current processes of evaluation and accreditation.

**Principle 12: NOT APPLICABLE**

#### IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: **4, 5, 7, 9, and 11.**

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **2, 6, 8, and 10.**

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are: **1 and 3.**

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

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

## The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname	Signature
1. <b>Prof. Efstathios K. Banakas</b> (Chair) University of East Anglia, Norwich, United Kingdom	
2. <b>Prof. Marios Katsioloudes</b> American University of Cyprus, Larnaka, Cyprus	
3. <b>Prof. Sophie Papaefthymiou</b> Institute for Political Science in Lyons, France	
4. <b>Mrs. Eleftheria Madika</b> Student of Business Administration, University of Western Macedonia, Kozani, Greece	