



**ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ**  
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



**Εθνική Αρχή  
Ανώτατης Εκπαίδευσης**  
Hellenic Authority  
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**Accreditation Report**  
**for the New Undergraduate Study Programme in operation**  
**of:**  
**Agriculture**  
**Institution: International Hellenic University**  
**Date: 17 December 2022**



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



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

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

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

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

**1. Prof. Constantin Vamvakas, Chair**

University of Ghent, Ghent, Belgium

**2. Prof. George Vellidis**

University of Georgia, Georgia, USA

**3. Prof. Andreas Katsiotis**

Cyprus University of Technology, Limassol, Cyprus

**4. Mr. Dimitrios Sotiriadis**

Member of the Geotechnical Chamber of Greece, Serres, Greece

**5. Ms. Maria Vargiami**

Student, Department of Agriculture, Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, Greece

## II. Review Procedure and Documentation

The Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (HAHE) initiated the accreditation review process for the undergraduate program (UP) of the Department of Agriculture (DoA) of the International Hellenic University (IHU) by physical presence. Scheduled briefings and meetings were conducted efficiently without difficulties.

On Saturday, December 10, 2022, a two-hour orientation meeting was held with the HAHE's Director-General Dr. Christina Besta, via ZOOM for all External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel (EEAP) members. Mr Sotiriadis and Ms. Vargiami joined the meeting. Profs. Vamvakas and Katsiotis, were unable to attend because of their simultaneous participation in another accreditation panel. Dr. Besta presented the Quality Assurance standards for Quality Accreditation of Undergraduate Programmes and Accreditation Guidelines, addressed attendee questions and conveyed to the EEAP the final timetable.

All related files regarding the accreditation process and the ones prepared by the DoA were forwarded to the committee members by HAHE in advance.

Before starting the meetings with the DoA, the members of the EEAP met Monday morning December 12 in order to discuss the strategy and the issues to consider during the discussions, as well as the distribution of different tasks for each panel member. During this meeting the President of HAHE, Prof. Periklis Mitkas visited the panel.

The accreditation review started on December 12<sup>th</sup> at 12.30 pm, according to the schedule prepared by HAHE.

First, the EEAP met with the IHU Vice-Rector, Prof. K. Makridou, the Department Head, Assoc. Prof. A. Pavlouidi and the Vice-President of the Department Prof. S. Angelopoulos. The Vice-Rector also serves as the President of the Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP). The EEAP was briefed on the history and academic profile of IHU; the Department Head presented a power point about the Department profile, its policy on quality assurance, and other issues related to the study program.

In the next meeting, EEAP met with the representatives of Quality Assurance Policy of DoA, Prof. V. Bampidis (OMEA), Prof. I Mitsopoulos (OMEA), Prof. O. Notta (OMEA), Prof. S. Koutsou (OMEA), Prof. S. Papadopoulou (OMEA), Prof. M. Konstantinou (OMEA), Prof. M. Papageorgiou (MODIP) and Ms. Maria Tsantouka, (MODIP, Staff).

EEAP discussed with these representatives the compliance of the undergraduate program (UP) to the standards for quality accreditation and other issues concerning the students' assignments, the theses, and the examination material.

In the following meeting EEAP discussed with the following nine members of the teaching staff: Assis.Prof. Avdikos Ilias, Assoc. Prof. Giannakoula Anastasia, Prof. Dhimas Kitsios, Assis. Prof. Kousenidis Konstantinos, Lec. Kiritsi Stavroula, Prof. Lymperopoulos Aristotelis, Assis. Prof. Ninou Elisavet, Assis. Prof. Stefanou Stefanos and Prof. Chatziplis Dimitrios. The main points of the discussion were: professional development opportunities, mobility, workload, student evaluations; competence and adequacy of the teaching staff to ensure learning outcomes; the

link between teaching and research; teaching staff's involvement in applied research, projects and research activities directly related to the program and possible areas of weakness.

The morning of Tuesday December 13<sup>th</sup> started with a debriefing of the EEAP members on last day discussions. Due to an important family issues Mr. D. Sotiriadis, member of the EEAP, could not participate in the following meetings of that day.

The first meeting was with the students. Nine students were present: 2 students from 3<sup>rd</sup> semester; 2 students from 5<sup>th</sup> semester; 4 students from 7<sup>th</sup> semester and 1 student from 9<sup>th</sup> semester. The discussions were mainly about their satisfaction with the study experience and the Department/Institution facilities, their involvement in quality assurance and any issues concerning student life and welfare.

Next, EEAP members visited within the main building 4 teaching/research laboratories, computer room, the library of the IHU and different classrooms and amphitheatres and discussed with staff members and the head librarian. They were accompanied by Assoc. Prof. A. Pavloudi, Head of the Department, Prof. V. Bampidis, Prof. I. Mitsopoulos and Assist. Prof. G. Kountios.

The following meeting took place with the social partners. Twelve persons from the public and social sector were present:

Mr Papacharisis Leonidas (Assurance/Sustainability Director of Avramar S.A.),<sup>[SEP]</sup> Mr Papadopoulos Ioannis (Director of Agricultural Service of DELTA Milk Industry) , Mr Garsen Athanasios (Director of the Centre for Animal Genetic Resources), Mamalis Spiros (President of the Geotechnical Chamber), Almpanis Theofanis (Deputy Mayor of Local Economy and Rural Development and Axios Municipal Unit in Delta Municipality), Mr Tempouras Lazaros (Representative of OIKOANAPTIXI A.E.), Mr Sidiropoulos Charalampos (HR Manager Agris SA), Mr Tziakas Spiros (Ergoplanning), Mr Batzios Christos (Greenco), Mr Kiriakidis Anastasios (General Manager of BIOZQKAT) and Ms Vassiliki Kotsambassi (ELGO - DEMETRA).

Following this meeting, EEAP members accompanied by Assoc. Prof. A. Pavloudi, Head of the Department, Prof. V. Bampidis, Prof. I. Mitsopoulos and Assist. Prof. G. Kountios visited the farm area, its open-air territories, the installations, laboratories and classrooms, and discussed with the staff members and the students working in the area.

The last two meetings took place with the OMEA and MODIP representatives, the Vice-Rector/President of MODIP and the President of the Department, during which the members of EEAP made a short debriefing to reflect on the impressions of the discussions and their key findings and asked some complement information and data from the staff.

From 14<sup>th</sup> to 17<sup>th</sup> December, the EEAP worked on the accreditation Report.

All parties involved conducted themselves professionally and the process was smooth, effective and efficient.

**Important note:** The new five-year undergraduate program is currently in its fourth academic year, since it was initiated in 2019. The two years completed during the COVID pandemic. Therefore, the EEAP conducted the evaluation and drew conclusions based on the experiences of the four-fifths of the program already completed, the documents provided regarding its strategic planning and studies program, and the discussions during the meetings.

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

The DoA was part of the Alexandrian Technological and Educational Institute (TEI) of Thessaloniki (Αλεξάνδρειο TEI Θεσσαλονίκης). Under Law 4610/2019 all Departments of the Alexandrian TEI were incorporated under the umbrella of the International Hellenic University, and the specific department joined the Faculty of Geotechnical Sciences (<https://agro.ihu.gr/>, <https://www.ihu.gr/tmimata/geoponias/>).

The DoA started its UP during the academic year 2019-2020 comprised three directions on different scientific subjects: a) Agriculture Economy and Entrepreneurship, b) Animal Science and c) Plant Science. It occupies the same buildings and infrastructure of the previous TEI, it has well-equipped laboratories and has access to a 120 hectares farm. It belongs to the category 0819 Agriculture of the UNESCO categorization scientific fields (ISCED 2013). The DoA's mission is to provide high-quality university-level education in agronomy and agronomical technology and promote science and technology through basic and applied research. The DoA offers education in three cycles: undergraduate, postgraduate, and Ph.D. levels in basic and applied research.

The Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs determines the number of incoming students yearly. The total number of registered undergraduate students in 2022 is 1116 (including 121 that were previously enrolled in the TEI). There were 316 incoming students in 2019, 288 in 2020, 185 in 2021 and 217 in 2022. There are currently 242 graduate students and 26 Ph.D. candidates studying in the Department.

The UP consists of 5 years of studies in 10 semesters, requiring a total of 300 ECTS. Each semester consists of 13 weeks of teaching and 4 weeks of exams. Based on the data received, 46 courses are mandatory, and 12 are electives. Two semesters (9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup>) are dedicated to the diploma thesis and practical work. The final Diploma grade is calculated in total from the grades of the individual courses (90%) and the grade of the Diploma Thesis (10%).

Today, the DoA comprises of 28 Faculty members (25 DEP and 3 EDIP), 3 special technical laboratory personnel (ETEP), 12 members with a short-term contract and 3 administrative staff members.

The last three years 2020-2022 there were more than 35 research programmes with an incoming budget of 1,7 million euros, 753 scientific publications (on average 34 by DEP member) and 8.419 citations (on average 383 by DEP member).

The DoA includes five established research laboratories:

- Agro-biotechnology and Control of Agricultural Products
- Agricultural Economic Research and Development
- Reproduction and Genetic Improvement of Productive Animals
- Management and Protection of the Environment for Sustainable Agricultural Development
- Laboratory of Precision Animal Husbandry and Integrated Swine Production Management

## **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**

### **I. Findings**

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

The Department of Agriculture (DoA) of the International Hellenic University (IHU) in Thessaloniki was established in 2019 (under Law 4610, published at the Government Gazette Number 70, A' issue, May 7<sup>th</sup>, 2019). However, this department is actually the continuation of the former Department of Agricultural Technology of the Alexandrian TEI of Thessaloniki after combining three Departments (Plant Sciences, Animal Sciences, and Agricultural Development and Management of Agricultural Businesses) (Presidential Decree 82 published at the Government Gazette Number 123/A/3-6-2013). Currently, the new Department is implementing the programme under accreditation, since the academic year 2019-2020.

The primary mission of the Department is to provide a comprehensive education for undergraduate students in all three directions, Plant Science, Animal Science, and Agricultural Economics and Entrepreneurship. The curriculum has been developed, taking into consideration the latest requirements for educating students in these three directions, based on the teaching and professional experience of the existing faculty members, after consulting national and international study programs of corresponding departments, and stakeholders. The Department accepted its first students, under the new five-year programme, during the academic year 2019-2020. The previous four-year programme terminated during the academic year 2021-2022. However, undergraduate students enrolled in the previous four-year curriculum were given the choice to pursue the new five-year programme.

The department has procedures to get feedback and update its curriculum so that it can be continuously adapted for meeting the changing needs of the Agricultural profession.

The scientific field of the department is included in the internationally established field of "Agriculture" (081) of Higher Education, as they are designated by the international categorization of scientific fields in education, by UNESCO (ISCED 2013).

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

According to the published Strategic and Operational Development Plan of the IHU for 2021-2024, there are six pillars of action: 1. Digital transformation of the Institute, 2. Green Deal, 3. Development of curricula adapted to the needs of the society towards entrepreneurship, 4. Internationalization of the University, 5. Strengthening of research and innovation, and 6. Strengthening the social role of the University. Accordingly, the Strategic and Operational Development Plant of the DoA is fully aligned to the above-mentioned pillars. The mission of the Department is to offer a high level of education in a friendly environment for both students and employees, accessible to all, production of internationally recognized research and contribute to the economic and social development of rural area. All of the above will be accomplished by providing high level of education and research, functional support of the student community, enhancing cooperation and international recognition, connection with

society and stakeholders, following the Green-Deal footprint, and the digital transformation of the Department.

The DoA is included in the Strategic Plan of the IHU, as part of the School of Geotechnical Sciences. A SWOT analysis, at the Institutional level does exist covering a wide spectra of *Strengths* (i.e. good infrastructure, presence of larger number of Departments, significant contributions of the academic staff to the research society, library support, etc), *Weaknesses* (i.e. the need of administrative and digital integration of the departments, short-staffed IT, find additional funding opportunities, absence of administrative procedures, etc), *Opportunities* (i.e. synergies among the different units of the IHU, unified policies and procedures for all units, possibilities of synergies with local businesses at the industrial area of Sindos, etc), and *Threats* (i.e. decreased governmental budget, low numbers of incoming students, increased competition between universities). The Department also recognizes the *Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities* and *Threats*, at the departmental level and have been recorded.

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

The agriculture sector is an important part to the Greek economy. The DoA is located in the outskirts of Thessaloniki, in the Industrial Park of Sindos. The Department is ideally situated in the centre of one of the most fertile plains in northern Greece, with a high production capacity of plant and animal products. Also, present in the area are major agro-industries and agricultural research stations. The facilities of the Department include classrooms, labs and most importantly a 120 hectares farm with storage rooms, shelters for machinery, animal shelters, greenhouses etc., within walking distance. At the moment there are strong ties with the local community (a bilateral agreement is in effect with the Municipality), and collaborations with other academic units, research stations and the private sector.

The curriculum under accreditation took into consideration other national and international study programs and have consulted stakeholders and the professional chamber (GEOTEE - ΓΕΩΤΕΕ). The curriculum takes into consideration the needs of the Economy at the European, National and Regional Level (including the use of sustainable agri-food systems, circular economy, food adequacy and safety, farmers' income), changes and developments in agri-business (revised CAP, implementation of agro-environmental methods, use of sustainable management, production and processing of quality certified agricultural products, precision agriculture), and the need for graduates in agriculture that are specialized in a competitive and viable primary production system.

The Department presents a study programme with three equally balanced directions: Plant Science, Animal Science and Agricultural Economics and Entrepreneurship. This is accomplished by four semesters (2-years) of common courses for students from all directions, followed by specialized courses for each direction for another 5 semesters (2 ½ - years), and a final semester of six-months Practical training, and research training and dissertation. During

these five-years the students should develop necessary skills and acquire knowledge needed to become well-trained agriculturists.

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

##### **Educational and research facilities**

The Department is located in Sindos at the campus of the former Alexandrian TEI of Thessaloniki, about 15 kms away from Thessaloniki city-centre. At the main building of the campus the DoA has access to fifteen (15) teaching classrooms, two (2) computer and multimedia rooms, three (3) established labs, one (1) study room, offices for the academic staff, the Secretariat of the Department, the office of the Chairperson of the Department, and the Library facilities. At the building of Animal Sciences there are five (5) teaching classrooms, five (5) training labs, and offices for the academic staff. Additionally, at the buildings of the farm there are six (6) teaching classrooms, seventeen (17) training labs, two (2) established labs, 0.6 hectares of greenhouses, and training plots with vines, olive trees, ornamentals, citrus, field crops, and an orchard with various trees. Growth chambers in labs and necessary scientific equipment are present. The farm is 120 hectares with all necessary machinery. The farm also has infrastructure (including milking facilities) to maintain cows, sheep, goats and pigs, but there are no animals, except for poultry. There are shelters housing machinery (tractors, plows, planters, etc). Almost all classrooms have a capacity of about 40-50 students, thus, during the first four semesters when all ~150 students are present, larger classrooms are needed.

One of the strongest assets of the DoA is the presence of all facilities (classrooms, teaching labs and farm) in close proximity, providing complete training for the students.

##### **Staff**

The DoA has currently (2022) a total of 25 academic staff (fifteen men and ten women) from which, eleven Professors, four Associate Professors, nine Assistant Professors and a Lecturer. The Department is supported by three (3) administrative employees. There are also three (3) Laboratory Teaching Staff, and three (3) Special Technical Staff. Additionally, three (3) academic staff from a different Department also provide teaching to the DoA, along with twelve (12) staff under short-term contracts.

##### **Funding**

The funding for the Department is provided by the annual public budget, research grants (HORIZON and other national projects), public investments, and fees from the two (2) programs at the MSc level.

##### **Services**

Service support for the Department is provided by the Library, the Central Secretariat of Student Affairs and Support, the IT department, the Student Residence, the restaurant, and the canteen.

### ***e. The structure of studies***

#### **The organization of studies**

The Department offers since the academic year 2019-20, a five-year (10 academic semesters) programme which leads to the accumulation of 300 European credits units (European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System - ECTS) and awards a degree in Agriculture with three distinct directions: Plant Science, Animal Science, and Agricultural Economics and Entrepreneurship. The first four (4) semesters a total of twenty-three (23) courses of general background are offered, plus three (3) within each direction, giving a total of 120 ECTS (including 2 courses in foreign language). During the following semesters (5<sup>th</sup> until the 9<sup>th</sup>) twenty-one (21) compulsory courses within each direction and nine (9) electives are offered, providing another 140 ECTS. Finally, during the 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> semesters the students are registered for 30 ECTS of Dissertation and another 10 ECTS, during the 10<sup>th</sup> semester, for six-months of Practical Training.

#### **Learning process**

A student-centered approach is ensured (beyond the traditional methods of teaching and evaluating students) based on the application for accreditation. Some key elements include: the large number of laboratory exercises oblige students to be present and actively participate, compulsory practical training, use of e-platforms, large number of elective courses, optional mid-term exams, individual or group presentations on specific topics, alternative ways of examination for students having learning disabilities, ability to participate in on-going research projects, and based on the course evaluation targeted corrective actions.

#### **Learning outcomes**

Overall, the learning outcomes of the curriculum are the ability to promote the development and transfer of technological and scientific knowledge associated with Agricultural Economics and Entrepreneurship, Plant Science and Animal Science. These skills are acquired through the teaching process, active participation in research, and through the compulsory six months of practical training.

### ***f. The number of admitted students***

The number of admitted students each year is set and proposed by the Department's Council to the Minis

try of Education and Religious Affairs; however, the final number is decided by the Ministry. The total number of incoming students for year 2019 were 316, for 2020 were 288, for 2021 were 188, for 2022 were 217, and the Department is proposing for the years 2023, 2024 and 2025 a maximum number of 180.

There are also limited numbers of transfer students from similar programmes.

### ***g. Postgraduate studies and research***

At present the DoA offers two Postgraduate Program Studies (P.M.S.) with the following titles: 1. Innovative Systems of Sustainable Agricultural Production, and 2. Environmental Management and Environmental Education, with 142 and 100 graduate students, respectively. There are also enrolled 26 PhD candidates.

The Department has also a number of post-docs (the number fluctuates according to available funds).

## **II. Analysis of judgment**

All of the points raised in Principle 1 were well documented and supported by the accompanying documents, and further explanations were provided during the on-site visit. A new website for the IHU is under construction and completion, that will also include all relevant information for the DoA.

## **III. Conclusions**

Overall, the impression of the department is positive. The infrastructure is complete (needs to be updated and upgraded, especially the farm) providing sustainability to the department.

## Panel Judgement

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

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

### **Panel Recommendations**

- Provide all necessary information for the new university website and include information present in the Students' Guide in both Greek and English versions.
- Correct translation of the English version of the website.
- Maintain and increase ties with stakeholders.
- Emphasize the strong points of why prospective students should study at this department
- There is no established procedure for utilizing student performance data that are drawn from the OPESP platform.



## 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

#### I. Findings

The International Hellenic University (IHU) has established a MODIP to define the review processes clearly and oversee improvement efforts. Also, the Department of Agriculture (DoA) has established an OMEA, that is monitored by the MODIP. The University has a published Quality Assurance Policy (QAP). According to the quality policy of the IHU, the organization seeks to be a centre of excellence in education and research while emphasizing internationalization, in utilization of research results, in teaching and learning innovation, in the development of entrepreneurship and in the connection of the University with society.

This policy contains six pillars of actions, including: digital transformation, Green Deal, development of curricula towards entrepreneurship, internationalization of IHU, support of research and innovation, and strengthening its social role. In order to achieve and implement the above goals, IHU has set specific quality assurance actions, with the aim of creating a framework within which its academic and administrative units must operate. A SWOT analysis is presented in its strategic planning, followed by yearly targets, actions, and qualitative and quantitative indicators. The implementation of this policy is expected to:

- Enhance the prestige and international recognition of all the degrees awarded by the University
- Strengthening the quality of academic activities, with the aim of improving student performance
- Increasing the satisfaction and trust of the agencies, stakeholders, and society towards the gain of knowledge, abilities and skills of the Institute's graduates
- Improvement of the competitive position of the University, in relation to other national and international Universities with similar curricula
- Strengthening the quality and quantity of research actions of the University
- Strengthening the culture of quality within the University and the society

Furthermore, a Quality Assurance Policy (QAP) at the departmental level also exists and is fully harmonized with the University's quality policy. The DoA QAP focuses on continuous improvement of the quality of study programs and education, as well as carry out research in full compliance with the rules and codes of ethics, in an ever-changing society. The Department's QAP is presented in detail in the Handbook of Quality Policy of the Department. Also, the quality assurance policy is made public to academic and administrative staff of the Department, and to its students for assuming responsibilities and initiatives by them.

Quality targets set by the University and the Department are published utilizing the S.M.A.R.T. (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound) methodology.

## **II. Analysis**

The IHU and the DoA comply with Principle 2 and have published Quality Assurance Policies.

## **III. Conclusions**

Quality assurance policies are in effect. The key elements in the Department's QAP are well described, are concise and comprehensible. Qualitative and quantitative goals of the Department are in accordance with its strategic planning and is presented also in a S.M.A.R.T. format.

## Panel Judgement

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

## Panel Recommendations

The departmental QAP should be included on the website.

### **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**

### **I. Findings**

The Governing Committee of the International Hellenic University (IHU) has decided on its 4<sup>th</sup> Meeting, July 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2019, to approve the UP of the DoA, as was decided by the Department Assembly on June 28<sup>th</sup>, 2019. During the July 2022 MODIP meeting of the IHU, there is a decision for recommendation to HAHE for the accreditation of the program.

A Students' Guide for the students of the DoA of the IHU has been published in 2021. In the Students' Guide the structure of the department is described, including the infrastructure, the administrative structure, the research activities, and the students' educating opportunities (ERASMUS, practical training). Also, the academic staff is presented along with their teaching and research expertise, along with their short CVs. Finally, the general learning skills, the professional rights of the graduates, the requirements for obtaining the degree, the structure and break-down of the courses for the common four semesters and the courses for each direction (Plant Science, Animal Science, and Agricultural Economics and Entrepreneurship) the following six semesters are presented; the compulsory practical training, and the dissertation are also presented, and details are explained. The Students' Guide also includes a short description of each course offered by the department. A number of courses providing digital skills to the students are listed; specialized software is used in a number of courses, however without specifying which software is used.

Overall the undergraduate study program curriculum is well-articulated and comprehensive. The department offers a 5-year programme of undergraduate studies. The current undergraduate programme has been in effect from 2019-2020 academic year. The ECTS system is applied across the curriculum, and one ECTS corresponds to 25 hours of student involvement. The strengths of the undergraduate program lie on the spectrum of fields covered in teaching and research, as well as on the integration of fieldwork and practical training, since the farm is in close proximity. Also, another strengthening factor of the curriculum is the six months practical training during the last semester. Links between research and teaching in the undergraduate program do exist. Mobility opportunities are also presented in the Students' Guide.

The section "Perspectives on Professional Employment of Graduates" can be enriched by including the professional rights (when they will be voted and become a law), include a large number of employment possibilities and maybe include graduates' opinion about their studies. Further educational opportunities are listed. The Students' Guide is considered complete providing answers to all possible questions that an undergraduate student might have.

### **II. Analysis**

The Students' Guide is comprehensive and all relevant information concerning infrastructure, administration, academic staff and their expertise, student opportunities (ERASMUS) and

responsibilities (including practical training and dissertation), and a short description of all courses are provided.

### III. Conclusions

All necessary steps and procedures have been followed by the IHU and the DoA. A Complete Students' Guide has been developed and is accessible to the students and public. Altogether, the Students' Guide is comprehensive, covering all elements of program curriculum, educational opportunities for students (ERASMUS), presenting academic staff and their area of research interests, and the supporting infrastructure, within its 123 pages.

The design of the new undergraduate program is comprehensive; it has been approved by the MODIP of the IHU (March 29<sup>th</sup>, 2022) and procedures monitoring its quality have been set.

#### Panel Judgement

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

#### Panel Recommendations

- The panel recommends including in the Students' Guide quantitative comparisons to similar curricula in renowned global programmes to meet self-imposed requirements for excellence and enhance its reputation
- List the software(s) used in the courses providing digital skills
- Key stakeholders and external partners should be consulted in future changes of the curriculum

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

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

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

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

### **Relevant documentation**

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

### **Study Programme Compliance**

#### **I. Findings**

- From the discussion the Panel members had with the students, the latter were generally pleased from their cooperation with the teachers and their study programme. They specifically spoke with zest about their teachers' hard work fulfilling their educational and administrative duties.
- The students' main concern is to find gainful employment after graduating from this Institution, since they do not yet have occupational rights to become members to the Geotechnical Chamber (ΓΕΩΤΕΕ).
- The laboratories' equipment is of high quality and serves to a great extent the educational and research needs, something the students clarified. They also mentioned that some of it needs to be upgraded and updated to better serve those needs.
- Educational excursions are carried out using precautions, especially when they include visits in farms and animal-breeding units due to health protocols.
- The study program offers a variety of courses that improve students' digital skills especially in the Agro-economics direction.
- The ECTS system is applied across the curriculum and corresponds to approximately 5 or 6 ECTS for each course except for the Practical Training (10 ECTS) and the graduate thesis (30 ECTS).

- As far as the library facilities are concerned, students want longer hours of operation. Nevertheless, it is a well-equipped library and students are taught to use the electronic means available.
- The Academic Advisor is assigned each year for each student and the students are aware of this benefit. However, the faculty have a close relationship with the students and are always eager to assist them at any time, not only during the established office-hours. Consequently, most students do not need to visit their advisors. Students indicated that they are most likely to use their advisor to help them select their direction.
- Lack of basic knowledge in fundamental courses that date back to High School, such as Chemistry, Mathematics, Biology, Physics caused difficulties for the students.
- The Institute uses Moodle to post the slides of the lectures for the students and the online site is quite inclusive.
- The ratio between males and females is satisfactory (55,22% annually) and there is mutual respect between both genders and between faculty and students.
- Faculty inform the students about the examination procedure, material and way of grading in advance so the latter may study efficiently and organize their time properly.
- Due to copyrights and personal rights, lectures are not recorded.
- Participation in course evaluations is extremely low (30%). All students that were interviewed during accreditation, assured us that they were evaluating the courses but they were not a representative sample of that participation.
- The students are aware of the main issues their Institution faces, which is the poor governmental funding, the extremely imbalanced ratio between students and staff and that some of the equipment needs to be upgraded and updated.
- Students take final exams at the end of the semester, but are also assessed through projects they have to present during the semester; for the final grade staff take both into consideration.

## **II. Analysis**

The low participation in the evaluation process is believed to occur due to student lack of understanding of how the evaluation process is used and because the evaluations are on line and not done in person in the classroom. In any case, the participation rates were higher when the questionnaires were answered inside class on paper.

## **III. Conclusions**

The DoA has a significant advantage due to its undergraduate study program which is indeed student-centered and should not lose or alter its practical training-oriented character.



## Panel Judgement

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

## Panel Recommendations

- The study program should include courses in the curriculum that will grant students a formal certificate of digital skills that can be recognized as a qualification when entering the job market.
- In order to support the library and fulfil students' request the University must find ways to keep it open for longer hours.
- During educational excursions and laboratory exercises, it is recommended that students sign waivers ensuring that they have understood the possible dangers and have fully comprehended the way the exercises must be carried out.
- The website could use modifications to be more attractive and informative to candidates and others visiting it to be acquainted about the curriculum, the study program and anything else concerning the Department.

## **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**

#### **I. Findings**

- Since this new UP is the continuation of the respective former TEI programme, the transition of original TEI students into the new curriculum must happen smoothly and efficiently.
- The mobility rates from and to the DoA through ERASMUS+ are very low. In fact, only 24 persons in total since 2019 have participated in ERASMUS+, mostly for practical training.

- The teaching farm lacks in financing and equipment, something that both parties mentioned, and is of the utmost importance. Especially for the Animal Production direction, the lack of animals and staff hinders research and experiments.
- Concerning the graduate thesis and the practical training, though they coincide in the 10<sup>th</sup> semester, the students claim that they were able to cope with their responsibilities. For that reason, they are advised to start the experimental component of their thesis in earlier semesters.
- The staff provide students with instructions on writing their thesis and lecture them on the matter.
- From the conversation with the stakeholders, it was extracted that they have good relations with the DoA and are satisfied with the students who are sent to them to do their internship. They emphasized the advantage they have over other departments, with internships lasting only 2 to 4 months, since the 6 months of training are considered enough, not only to help students familiarize with the working environment but also acquire the necessary experience for future employment, even right after graduation. Some of the stakeholders mentioned that they have kept and employed students after their graduation.
- There are no taught courses in English in order to attract foreign students through ERASMUS, and so the mobility remains at low levels.

## II. Analysis

The Diploma and the Study Certificate are issued, without exception, to all graduates in Greek and English.

## III. Conclusions

Course evaluation by students is carried out, but they need to increase the participation rate, since the current 30% is low

### 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	
Substantially compliant	<b>X</b>
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### **Panel Recommendations**

- To increase the mobility through ERASMUS+, staff needs to convey the importance of this program to students emphasizing this big opportunity to broaden horizons and experience the life abroad.
- The DoA should maintain the good relations and cooperation with agriculture-related businesses, which is the link between the students and the job market.

## **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**

#### **I. Findings**

- The significant lack of teaching and administrative staff burdens the teachers' workload and, in some cases, even lack the necessary specialized staff (i.e. pomology). There are only 25 faculty members that need to process the educational and administrative load.
- There is an imbalance of student/teacher ratio, which leads to extreme educational and administrative work for the teaching staff without reducing the quality of their teaching responsibilities.
- From the interviews of the Panel members with the teaching staff, it was communicated that the latter have passion for teaching on their respective scientific field and face the teaching process as a calling and not as a profession something that is conveyed to the students and creates a good environment between them.
- For some students that may have knowledge gaps, the faculty members ensure that they fill them in.

- As far as the farm is concerned, the DoA should be able to physically and financially manage the farm, so that it can be utilized to its maximum potential. Rental income from the farm should flow back directly for farm management.
- The farm covers an area of 120 hectares and is used for educational purposes.
- The main issue with the farm is the lack of personnel to manage it.
- There are 46 obligatory courses necessary for a student to graduate and 12 electives that need to be attended. There is a specific number of courses that need to be attended so the students have the right to choose a specific direction. There is an option to select specific courses that leads them to the possibility of late selection of direction.
- Over 35 research programmes brought in over 1.7 million € worth.
- The Career Day that is organized is an opportunity for students to be informed about job market and of other relative issues.
- The DoA organizes cultural and other events like the Photography Competition.
- The DoA secretariat consists of 3 members and is open for students for 2 hours through 11:00-13:00 daily.
- Another advantage of the DoA is that the farm is within the campus.

## II. Analysis

The students state that the staff members of the DoA are good scientists, committed to their teaching responsibilities, and accessible to the students.

## III. Conclusions

The DoA has established good relations with the stakeholders and is capable of training students to be ready to cope with their possible future employers' demands.

### Panel Judgement

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

### **Panel Recommendations**

- Utilizing the farm to its full potential should be of the highest priority.
- Annual teaching and research awards should be granted to students and faculty staff.
- The idea of taking exams to gain license to drive agricultural machinery is good and needs to be re-adopted.

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

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

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

### **Relevant documentation**

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

### **Study Programme Compliance**

#### **I. Findings**

DoA privately owned premises are part of the wider area of the IHU (Alexandria University Campus), where it is co-located with other Departments, in a total area of approximately 2,000 sq.m. The Department has a total of 27 classrooms, 5 established research laboratories, 32 student practice laboratories and 2 student study rooms (study rooms). At the same time, the Department utilize the farm of about 120 hectares, which has appropriate infrastructure for Plant and Animal Production (crops, greenhouses, animal farms). On the farm there are infrastructures and laboratory equipment worth more than 20 million euros, which give the opportunity for practical training of students, but also to conduct many experiments and research programs.



The department has a good website (<https://agro.ihu.gr/>), with a simplified menu and direct user-friendly access to English language as well but needs improvement.

The staff of the department participate in a total of twenty-three (23) Research Programs as Scientific Coordinators and thirty-five (35) Research Programs as participating researchers.

The main Library (<https://lib.ihu.edu.gr>) of IHU is located in Thermi, in a hall of 600 square meters, but a Library serving the DoA students exists on the campus in Sindos, which has a plethora of related books and scientific journals that is constantly enriched.

There is an internal fibre optic network, centered on the Department of Informatics, which, in combination with the University's participation in the university internet G. U. net. (Greek Universities network, <http://www.G.U.net.gr>), allows gradual access to all sources of information throughout the world. IHU students are provided with free access to the Internet, via remote connection (dial-up), upon presentation of their student ID card at the Network Operation Centre (NOC). However, there is no Wi-Fi in all parts of the Department's buildings.

A large number of functions of the department are supported by the use and utilization of information and telecommunications technologies. Specifically, the following operate: the electronic platform of asynchronous education e-class, the electronic education portal Moodle (<http://moodle.teithe.gr>), the Uniportal teaching assistant system (<https://uniportal.ihu.gr>), which is an application that enables students to contact the Secretariat of the Department from any computer and place.

There is a Liaison office, the aim of which (<https://www.ihu.edu.gr/gateway>) is the communication of the IHU's graduates with their alumni in the business world and the facilitation of professional adaptation. It has an Office of Transnational Educational Programs (<http://ecs.ihu.edu.gr/co/erasmus/erasmusplus>). Its aim is to connect the IHU and develop partnerships with corresponding educational institutions in Europe, as well as in other countries. Within the framework of the Erasmus programme, collaborations are being developed with European institutions, in actions such as: mobility of students, teachers for short-term teaching, preparatory visits, European credit transfer system.

Due to the pandemic, however, only 24 students made use of the Erasmus programme.

The Internship Office contributes to the consolidation and systematization of the necessary communication of students with the labour market.

The IHU operates an office for people with disabilities, which aims at the accessibility of its students with special needs to the premises of the University, as well as their familiarization with new technologies and the world wide web. Classrooms and laboratories have access for students with disabilities, but not in all areas of the facilities.

The Innovation and Entrepreneurship Unit of the IHU aims to educate, guide, and support its students and graduates, who wish to undertake new innovative business initiatives.

The University has two dormitories, with a capacity of 300 rooms. The criteria for selecting students are economic and social. According to a recent regulation, students who meet the prescribed conditions are entitled to a student allowance.

The University has a restaurant in the main building, as well as a restaurant of the city of Thessaloniki. Beneficiaries are offered three meals a day, throughout the academic year. The criteria for obtaining the meal card are financial and performance in studies.

The State Scholarships Foundation (IKY) grants scholarships to students who excelled in the general examinations, as well as to those who are ranking first every year in their studies. Interest-free loans are also granted to students in accordance with the applicable provisions.

Students enjoy free full medical and hospital care. At the same time, the IHU operates in the main building an office, daily open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., with nursing staff.

The IHU has an indoor gym, where students are offered the opportunity to exercise and participate in various sports activities such as: Basketball, Volleyball and Chess, etc. Also, there are open spaces for football, archery, and sports.

Students participate in photography and painting exhibitions as well as in cultural events.

There is a faculty assigned to each student (Study Advisor), from the first semester, who advises and guides students on issues of study and curriculum.

Student study groups are organized, the program is called "umbrella", where volunteer students act as mentors and help young students.

Students can obtain a driver's license for agricultural machinery inside the department's premises after taking exams.

The DoA is funded by the annual governmental budget of the University and the public investment program. Additionally, it is supported by the Special Account for Research Funds (ELKE) of the IHU by the distribution of revenues withheld in favour of the University from the two Postgraduate Programs of Study offered by the Department. Also, in order to ensure its proper operation, the department is looking for other sources of funding, such as donations and sponsorships. Furthermore, the Department modernizes its laboratory equipment through the implementation of development and research programs.

The administrative services of the Department are extremely efficient, however they are not sufficiently staffed, as the ratio of administrators to student is about 3/3,000.

The students who participated in the interviews expressed their satisfaction with the effectiveness of the department's services.

As a conclusion, the team found that the department fully complies with the principle.

## **II. Analysis**

The above infrastructure was well presented during the tour as well as through the presentation files.

### III. Conclusions

The Department has adequate facilities to support the program of study and its students. The teaching equipment in classrooms and laboratories is of satisfactory quality, but some classrooms/laboratories and greenhouses need renovation/modernization.

#### Panel Judgement

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

#### Panel Recommendations

- The University authorities should increase funding to the department to ensure the continuous maintenance of the facilities.
- There should be Wi-Fi in all areas of the university.
- It is highly recommended that the Department implement an emergency response protocol and do frequent emergency exercises and have safety regulations posted in all laboratories.

## 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

#### I. Findings

The Department collects, analyses, and uses several data sets to annually evaluate the Undergraduate Program of Study (UP). The data sets reside on departmental and university information management systems. Data are collected using protocols established by the IHU Unit for Quality Assurance (MODIP) and the Department's Unit for Quality Assurance (OMEA). These protocols are available online at <https://modip.ihu.edu.gr>.

The information management systems are listed below.

- The University wide-based MODIP system
- The Departmental information management system
- The ERASMUS program management system
- The Career Office management system
- The Comprehensive National Quality Control Information System (ΟΠΕΣΠ) of ΕΤΗΑΕ

The tools used to collect data include but are not limited to:

- Course evaluation questionnaires conducted by students between the 8<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> week of each semester. In addition to questions about the individual course, the questionnaire includes questions about the Department, infrastructure, and related topics.
- Instructor questionnaires.
- Practical training evaluation questionnaires (Πρακτική Άσκηση).
- Student academic progress.

- Demographic data of enrolled students.
- Participation in Erasmus programs by students and instructors.
- Electronic and in-person requests from students for services.
- Surveys of graduates gaging satisfaction with their academic experience. Since the UP is currently in the first semester of its 4<sup>th</sup> academic year, it does not yet have graduates. The surveys are distributed to graduates of the former UP that was offered by the TEI.

Examples of data sets collected during each semester are listed below. Data are analysed by the OMEA, quantified in the form of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), discussed at subsequent Departmental General Assembly meetings (γενική συνέλευση), and used to improve teaching, research, and related activities.

- Student satisfaction with courses and departmental teaching support infrastructure
- Pass/fail rates of individual courses
- Instructional and research activities of the faculty members
- The administrative staff support
- Student academic progress
- Data on course evaluations by the students
- Student profiles

Results of some KPIs such as the results of the course evaluation questionnaires are easily accessible online. Student participation in the course evaluation questionnaires which are conducted electronically is less than 30%. The KPIs were used by the OMEA to develop the Department's Accreditation Report.

Although metrics are recorded for how many enrolled students pass each course and were included in the Accreditation Report, these data are not converted to pass rates (% of students who pass the course). The EEAP requested these data from the OMEA and they indicate that the pass rate of courses ranges from 1% to greater than 75%. Although there may be inaccuracies in the data because they do not capture if the same student took and failed the course final exam more than once, several courses have pass rates of less than 10% even with a large number of enrolled students.

## **II. Analysis**

The Department implements effective procedures for collecting and analysing information on the operation of the unit and its study programmes. However, some data may be used more effectively. The Department collects, analyses, and uses several data sets to annually evaluate the UP. The data sets reside on departmental and university information management systems. Data are collected using protocols established by the IHU MODIP and the OMEA.

### III. Conclusions

The Department implements effective procedures for collecting and analysing information on the operation of the unit and its study programmes. However, some data may be used more effectively.

#### Panel Judgement

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

#### Panel Recommendations

- Electronic course evaluation questionnaires have resulted in low participation rates worldwide. One solution is to encourage students to complete surveys during class periods which has been found to improve participation rates.
- Develop a methodology to more accurately quantify course pass rates and use those data to ensure that quality of instruction is not the cause of low pass rates. Pass rate should be a KPI used regularly by the OMEA to assess teaching.
- Regardless of how difficult course material may be, a course pass rate of under 10% requires a careful reassessment of teaching methods.
- Develop a methodology to collect employment data and provide information on career paths and employability of graduates.

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

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

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

### **Relevant documentation**

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

### **Study Programme Compliance**

#### **I. Findings**

The Department maintains a modern, attractive and informative website (<https://agro.ihu.gr>) in Greek and English with pull-down menus which are listed below. Each of these menus has several nested submenus that contain links to documents and/or provide information on specific topics.

- General information about the Department
- Staff listings including names and email addresses of faculty members
- Information about undergraduate and graduate studies including PDFs of programme of study, course syllabi, and course reading materials
- Research
- Links to useful information including quality assurance
- Current information
- First year registration information

Information on Quality Assurance includes links to documents on the Department's Quality Assurance Policy, Internal Evaluations for 2019-2020 and 2021-2022 academic years and a spreadsheet with graphical results of student evaluations for each semester of the above listed academic years. There are no links to the IHU Quality Assurance website nor to the IHU External Accreditation Report which should be added to this submenu. Pass rates of courses are not available on the website.

The Department's website does not provide information or links to the campus library (or any library), career office, the Moodle teaching platform, descriptions of the student advisor and student mentor roles, and non-discrimination policies.

Despite the good design and attractive appearance, some of the Department's website menus are poorly populated with information while some are without information. In addition, many items are poorly translated, and the English translation does not have the same meaning as the Greek word(s). One example is the Σπουδές (Studies) \ Πρακτική Άσκηση (Workshop) menu. Clearly the word Workshop does not have the same meaning as the term Πρακτική Άσκηση. The menu is populated only by a link to a PDF that has guidelines for the practical training activity.

There is no information on Department's website about the required thesis (Πτυχιακή Εργασία). In addition to providing the necessary information, the website could also provide links to the electronic theses that are archived in the library. This could be a valuable recruiting tool as well as it would allow potential students to see the type of research conducted by past students.

Under the Τμήμα (Department) \ Κατευθύνσεις (Directions) menu there is good information about the areas of emphasis offered by the undergraduate programme of study. This information is better placed under that pull-down menu.

The IHU website (<https://ihu.gr>) includes clear links to information about the Department including the programme of study (PDF), list of faculty, and other information. However, the IHU website also contains confusing information about the status of the Department's website.

The Department has active social media accounts on Facebook and LinkedIn with regular postings and is active on Research Gate. Social media are an excellent way to reach the public.

## **II. Analysis**

The Department maintains a modern, attractive, and informative website in Greek with pull-down menus. Each of these menus has several nested submenus that contain links to documents and/or provide information on specific topics. However, not all the menus are populated at this time. The English version of the website is not well translated.

## **III. Conclusions**

The Department provides information about its activities, including the UP they offer, the intended learning outcomes, the degrees awarded, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, and the learning opportunities available to their students. Pass rates of courses, graduate employment perspectives, and other items identified in the recommendation below must be made available on the website.



## Panel Judgement

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

## Panel Recommendations

Today, the primary means of communicating with students and other stakeholders is through electronic means such as websites and social media. As such, the Department publishes information about their teaching and academic activities through these means. The relevant information is mostly available on these platforms, but some improvements are needed. Recommendations for improvement are listed below.

- Department Website
  - Add information or links to the campus library, career office, the Moodle teaching platform, descriptions of the student advisor and student mentor roles, non-discrimination policies, and course pass rates to the website.
  - The English version of the website requires improvement primarily in translation. The current version may be an inhibiting factor in attracting Erasmus students as they may find it difficult to find information for which they are searching.
  - Move the area of emphasis information from the Τμήμα (Department) \ Κατευθύνσεις (Directions) menu to the undergraduate programme of study pull-down menu.
  - Since the 6-month practical training is one of the flagship attributes of the programme of study, it should be highlighted on the website as it could be a valuable recruiting tool. In addition to this necessary document describing this activity, the website could include a list of the potential practical training employers and/or employers where students have conducted their practical training in the past as well as photographs and short descriptions of some of the best internship experiences of past students.
  - Add a page that includes profiles of successful graduates with short videos of them describing how their degree contributed to their success. EEC expects that many of the graduates and employers with whom it met would be happy to do this. Such a page may be an excellent tool for recruiting students from all over Greece who are interested in studying agriculture. The stories should also be promoted on social media and perhaps on local television outlets in the region.
  - Add a page to the website that includes a catalogue of successful outreach activities as well as announcements of upcoming activities.
  - Correct the issue with the IHU website mentioned above.
- Social Media
  - Form a social media student club that can promote the Department's teaching, research, outreach, and social activities (photo club, etc.) on social media platforms that are more commonly frequented by potential students. Examples are Instagram and TikTok.

## 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**

#### **I. Findings**

The O.E.A. of the DoA in collaboration with the faculty members of the Department designed the internal quality assurance system, which was approved for implementation unanimously by the General Assembly.

The procedures that have been provided for the collection and recording of information concerning the students of the Department, the teaching staff, the structure of the UP, the evaluation of the teaching load provided, the provision of services, etc. concern the following mechanisms:

The information system for computerization of student records and programme of study is managed by the Secretariat of the Department. It provides the ability to collect and process data related to the management of undergraduate students' data, the recording of changes in student status, the curriculum, course data, teaching assignments, diploma / dissertations, practical exercises, statements and entry of grades, issuance of certificates, proclamation and graduation.

The student evaluation questionnaires have been specially designed for the needs of each Department by MODIP. They are submitted electronically by the students of the Department near the end of the semester, through the website of MODIP (<https://modip.ihu.edu.gr/>). The questionnaires are completed anonymously with questions regarding the courses, the syllabus, the criteria for evaluating the courses, the exercises, the educational infrastructure, the teaching work provided, the individual study of the students of the Department, the administrative services.

The response of students to the completion of questionnaires was about 30%.

An important source of information for data concerning the members of the teaching staff are also the teachers' census sheets. They are completed by the members of the teaching staff each academic year, from which information is collected regarding their data, including research projects, the research infrastructures used and their publications. All of the above are considered as quality indicators related to the teaching staff, their internal evaluation reports, etc. These data remain in the archives of the Department.

The annual internal report of the Department is a source of information of the Internal Quality Assurance System, concerning its implemented academic and research work, the mapping of the current situation, kinds of collaborations with external bodies. It is accompanied by tables and data concerning the indicators of the student population, the curriculum, the educational and research work, which prove useful for the evaluation of the educational process in the context of improving and upgrading the educational work and the Curriculum of the Department.

The annual internal report of the Department, the third that has been submitted with the new curriculum, is communicated to MODIP, to the members of the teaching staff, but it is also posted on the department's website.

These data are collected by the OMEA, analysed, communicated to all faculty members and discussed in at least one Assembly of the department in the presence of student representatives. Where failures and problems are identified, action plans are implemented.

## **II. Analysis**

The Department must address the problem of low student participation in the evaluation process.

## **III. Conclusions**

It is strongly suggested that the Department address the low participation of students in course evaluations and use the data generated to identify solutions to existing problems.

## Panel Judgement

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

## Panel Recommendations

- The indicators of the quality objectives must be reviewed and adapted to the strategic objectives of the Department.
- There should be continuous information from the teaching staff about the dates, the procedure and the importance of student participation in order to increase as much as possible cooperation in the evaluation and completion of questionnaires. At the same time, however, there should be an enrichment and updating of the questions. Add open-ended questions to allow students to work on key aspects or raise concerns that are not addressed elsewhere.
- Design an evaluation questionnaire, which will be completed by the first graduates of the DoA from the new UP and will collect data concerning the overall Program of Study (courses, learning outcomes, examinations, internships), of the teaching staff, as well as the services provided by the Department.
- Perform a multivariate statistical analysis of all the information embedded in the questionnaires to identify correlations between the questions and the evaluation results to be posted on the department's website and the related improvement actions taken.
- Design a way, through questionnaires and interviews with private and public bodies in the region, on the labour market, so that there is a better connection between studies and the labour market.

## **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**

#### **I. Findings**

The Department and the current program of study were established in 2019 as a result of integration of the former TEI Makedonias with the IHU. The first students to pursue the program of study entered during the 2019-2020 academic year. Neither the Department nor the programme of study have been externally evaluated prior to the accreditation review reported here. The IHU was reviewed by an External Accreditation Panel during May 2021 and was subsequently accredited by HAHE.

The Department has established an Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) that routinely collects key performance indicators (KPIs) that are used for developing the IQAS reports and accumulating the data used for the report developed for the IQAS accreditation. In addition, the Department has been submitting annual IQAS reports for the programme of study and the Department to HAHE. These documents were provided to the EEAP by the Department and HAHE.

#### **II. Analysis**

The Department and the current program of study were established in 2019 and consequently neither the Department nor the programme of study have undergone external evaluation prior to the accreditation review reported here. However, the Department has established an IQAS that routinely collects KPIs that are used for developing the IQAS reports and accumulating the data used for the report developed for the IQAS accreditation.

### III. Conclusions

We acknowledge that the Department has no responsibility for the lack of previous external evaluation. Therefore, the EEAP voted “fully compliant” for the evaluation and not accreditation.

#### 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

Not applicable

## **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**

#### **I. Findings**

MODIP has prepared a detailed report on the transitional period of the pre-existing curriculum until its completion.

For the first time, an internal quality assurance system of the Department is established. The quality indicators have been selected in accordance with the strategic objectives of the Department and the IHU as a whole. Their periodic review is also planned in the same direction.

The Program meets the ECTS unit standards established by European standards for an accredited DoA at university level. The department has established a continuous six-month practical training.

The department has provided the option for students who were admitted to the previous programme to pursue the new UP. This requires that students follow 14 additional courses.

## II. Analysis

All teaching and research staff are sufficiently qualified to support the program and meet teaching and research requirements.

## III. Conclusions

All students are awarded a university-level degree that is in line with the skills and qualifications described in Presidential Decree 344/2000 on professional rights.

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

- Promote a more open and competitive environment in research and teaching
- Collection and analysis of information on student participation and course evaluation
- Development of strategies to reduce the ratio of professors to students.



## **PART C: CONCLUSIONS**

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

- The Faculty is accessible and available for personal communication with their students
- The Department's focus on applied research, strong affiliations with local stakeholders, and legacy in agricultural science and technology excellence are met with an overwhelming endorsement by student applicants
- The students are exposed in a number of different activities, cultivation practices and crops.
- The comparative advantage of the Department is the close proximity of the farm
- The students have a 6-months practical training
- The department gives to its students the ability to choose from three different directions during their studies (after the 4<sup>th</sup> semester)
- The option of students to get a driving license of farm machinery (tractor driving license)

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

- Mobility at the faculty and student level is limited
- Students do not complete evaluations for all semester courses
- Underutilized farm due to reduced funding
- Lack of specialized personnel (teaching staff -DEP- and technical staff -EDIP)
- Limited access to the Library due to restricted operating hours
- Lack of professional rights for graduates
- Lack of certificate in digital skills, although there are courses taught

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

- Utilizing the farm to its full potential should be of the highest priority to the DoA and the IHU.
- Improve the DoA website so that it is more informative to potential and current students as well as the public.
- Improve translation of the English version of the website.
- Add information or links to the campus library, career office, the Moodle teaching platform, descriptions of the student advisor and student mentor roles, non-discrimination policies, and course pass rates to the website
- Include in the Students' Guide quantitative comparisons to similar curricula in renowned global programmes to meet self-imposed requirements for excellence and enhance its reputation.
- List the software used in the courses providing digital skills.

- Maintain and increase ties with stakeholders.
- During educational excursions and laboratory exercises, it is recommended that students sign waivers ensuring that they have understood the possible dangers and have fully comprehended the way the exercises must be carried out.
- To increase the mobility through ERASMUS+, staff needs to convey the importance of this program to students emphasizing this big opportunity to broaden horizons and experience the life abroad.
- The DoA should maintain its good relations and cooperation with agriculture-related businesses, which is the link between the students and the job market
- Annual teaching and research awards should be granted to students and faculty staff.
- The idea of taking exams to gain license to drive agricultural machinery is good and needs to be re-implemented.
- There should be Wi-Fi in all areas of the university.
- It is highly recommended that the department implement an emergency response protocol and do frequent emergency exercises and have safety regulations posted in all laboratories.
- Develop a strategy to reduce the student to professor ratio.
- Develop a methodology to more accurately quantify course pass rates and use those data to ensure that quality of instruction is not the cause of low pass rates. Pass rate should be a KPI used regularly by the OMEA to assess teaching.
- Regardless of how difficult course material may be, a course pass rate of under 10% requires a careful reassessment of teaching methods.
- Consider offering new courses on emerging technologies in agriculture.

#### IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: **1, 2, 3, 4, 7, 8, 11, and 12.**

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **5, 6, 9, and 10.**

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

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

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

## The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname	Signature
<p><b>1. Prof. Constantin Vamvakas, Chair</b> University of Ghent, Ghent, Belgium</p>	
<p><b>2. Prof. George Vellidis</b> University of Georgia, Georgia, USA</p>	
<p><b>3. Prof. Andreas Katsiotis</b> Cyprus University of Technology, Limassol, Cyprus</p>	
<p><b>4. Mr. Dimitrios Sotiriadis</b> Member of the Geotechnical Chamber of Greece, Serres, Greece</p>	
<p><b>5. Ms. Maria Vargiami</b> Student, Department of Agriculture, Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, Greece</p>	