



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ

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HELLENIC REPUBLIC

HQA

HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE
AND ACCREDITATION AGENCY

Accreditation Report for the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS)

Institution Name: University of Piraeus

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**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 HQA to undertake the review of the
Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) of the University of Piraeus for
the purposes of granting accreditation

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Part A: Background and Context of the Review	4
I. The Accreditation Panel	4
II. Review Procedure and Documentation	5
III. Institution Profile	7
Part B: Compliance with the Principles	8
Principle 1: Institution Policy for Quality Assurance	8
Principle 2: Provision and Management of the Necessary Resources	12
Principle 3: Establishing Goals for Quality Assurance	16
Principle 4: Structure, Organisation and Operation of the IQAS	19
Principle 5: Self-Assessment	22
Principle 6: Collection of Quality Data: Measuring, Analysis and Improvement	26
Principle 7: Public Information	31
Principle 8: External Evaluation and Accreditation of the IQAS	35
Part C: Conclusions	37
I. Features of Good Practice	37
II. Areas of Weakness	37
III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions	38
IV. Summary & Overall Assessment	39

PART A: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW

I. The Accreditation Panel

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) of the Higher Education Institution named: **University of Piraeus** comprised the following four (4) members, drawn from the HQA Register, in accordance with the Law 4009/2011:

1. Professor S. J. Pantazopoulou (Chair)
York University, Toronto, Canada
2. Prof. Emeritus Ioannis Vlahos,
Hellenic Mediterranean University, Crete, Greece
3. Prof. Ioannis Michaelides
Cyprus University of Technology, Limassol, Cyprus
4. Assoc. Prof. Christos Anastasiou, Dean of Engineering
Frederick University, Nicosia, Cyprus

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

Accreditation Panel (AP) members, Professors S.J. Pantazopoulou, Ioannis Vlahos, Ioannis Michaelides and Associate Professor Christos Anastasiou met at the Hotel Stratos Vasilikos in Athens on Monday, July 8 2019 and were briefed about the HQA mission and guidelines of Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) accreditation. The members of the AP met after the briefing and prior to the site visit and discussed the specifics of the proposal of accreditation submitted by the University of Piraeus (UniPi) and the Chair allocated the tasks and issues to be discussed during the site visit.

On the following day, Tuesday July 9, the AP members were transferred to the University of Piraeus and had a brief welcome meeting with the Rector Prof. Angelos Kotios and Vice Rectors Professors P. Pantelidis, G. Chondrokoukis and M. Koutras. The Rector presented the history of the University, its present status and its commitment to a quality policy applied to all its activities, and the vision and outreach actions for branding the University. The Vice Rectors presented the main issues related to their areas of responsibilities regarding Administrative Affairs, Research, Lifelong Learning, Economics, Planning and Development.

The next meeting was held with the 10 members of the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) and the President of the QAU, Vice-Rector Prof. P. Pantelidis. During a three-hour meeting the AP were given a thorough presentation of the activities carried out by the QUA and their compliance with the IQAS. A fruitful discussion took place relating to quality culture, quality structure and management as well as the self-assessment processes.

The meetings continued with representatives of the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG/OMEA) during which the Panel held extensive and informative discussions and gained useful insights on the application of the Quality Policy of the University in the academic units and the interactions between the IEGs and the QAU. The AP did not have the chance to meet any Heads or other faculty members of the Departments. At the end of the first day the AP, prior to their departure, met privately and exchanged their views and impressions from the site visit and prepared for the second day of visit.

On the following day the AP were transported to the University premises (Senate Room) and held a series of meetings and interviews with administrative staff, alumni, postgraduates and students as well as social partners and external stakeholders. During these meetings, the AP discussed and exchanged views on a variety of issues regarding teaching activities, research, staff/student mobility, student satisfaction, department external relations and areas of quality assurance. Discussions with students and alumni was centered on student satisfaction from their experiences and their views of the program of studies and other issues relating to quality of their studies and career opportunities. Due to the fact that the site visit took place during a period in which classes had ended, the AP did not have the opportunity to meet and discuss with other students in the classroom or on the University premises. The external stakeholders expressed their strong support to the University and described their fruitful cooperation and interactions with the various Departments. The last meeting was held with the members of the QAU discussing further points and issues that needed clarification. During a break the AP was given a short tour of the premises of the University visiting laboratories and the library.

The AP concluded the site visit by holding a brief meeting with the Rector and the President of QAU during which key findings from the visit were presented.

The Panel was provided, prior to the visit, with the required documentation for study and evaluation. These documents included the Accreditation proposal for the IQAS of the University, the University Quality Assurance Manual, the Strategic Plan, and other relevant documentation. Additional documents were promptly provided during the visit upon request. The Panel members concluded their visit on the second day and started working on the Draft Accreditation report based on the supplied documents and

the information acquired during the visit. Report writing continued in the following two days in the premises of hotel Alexandros.

The AP experienced a warm welcome by the Rector and staff of the University and recognized a genuine spirit of cooperation by all members involved in the day long meetings. The willingness to cooperate and support the University's quality policy was evident at all levels. In conclusion, the AP acknowledges the positive attitude, enthusiasm and professionalism of all faculty members and particularly thanks the Vice Rector of Academic Affairs, the QUA and IEGs for their cooperation and useful discussions held during the visit.

III. Institution Profile

The University of Piraeus was established in 1938 as School of Industrial Studies, renamed to Higher School of Industrial Studies in 1958, and operated initially with one Department. In 1984 the school was organized to include three departments: Economic Science, Business Administration and Statistics and Insurance Science. In 1989 it was named University of Piraeus and originally comprised three Departments. Gradually, more Departments were created. Currently, ten departments are operating under four Schools as follows:

- **ECONOMICS, BUSINESS AND INTERNATIONAL STUDIES**
 - Department of Economics
 - Department of Business Administration
 - Department of International & European Studies
 - Department of Tourism Studies
- **MARITIME AND INDUSTRIAL STUDIES**
 - Department of Maritime Studies
 - Department of Industrial Management & Technology
- **FINANCE AND STATISTICS**
 - Department of Banking & Financial Management
 - Department of Statistics & Insurance Science
- **INFORMATION AND COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGIES**
 - Department of Informatics
 - Department of Digital Systems

The University of Piraeus operates thirty (30) graduate programs (MSc) and offers Doctoral studies. The total number of students is approximately 15.400, of which 3.000 are graduate students and 380 are doctoral students.

The academic and teaching staff numbers 230 (i.e., an undergraduate student to Academics ratio of 52:1), including 50 lab instructors and technicians and 100 administrative staff.

The University premises are located in the downtown area of the city of Piraeus covering an area of 32.500 m² including teaching and research facilities, administration offices, a library, student dormitories and a restaurant.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

Principle 1: Institution Policy for Quality Assurance

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD APPLY A QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY AS PART OF THEIR STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT. THIS POLICY SHOULD BE DEVELOPED AND ADJUSTED ACCORDING TO THE INSTITUTIONS' AREAS OF ACTIVITY. IT SHOULD ALSO BE MADE PUBLIC AND IMPLEMENTED BY ALL PARTIES INVOLVED.

The quality assurance policy is the guiding document which sets the operating principles of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS), the principles for the continuous improvement of the Institution, as well as the Institution's obligation for public accountability. It supports the development of quality culture, according to which, all internal stakeholders assume responsibility for quality and engage in quality assurance. This policy has a formal status and is publicly available.

The policy for quality is implemented through:

- *the commitment for compliance with the laws and regulations that govern the Institution;*
- *the establishment, review, redesign and redefinition of quality assurance objectives, that are fully in line with the institutional strategy.*

This policy mainly supports:

- *the organisation of the internal quality assurance system;*
- *the Institution's leadership, departments and other organisational units, individual staff members and students to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance;*
- *the integrity of academic principles and ethics, guarding against discriminations, and encouragement of external stakeholders to be involved in quality assurance;*
- *the continuous improvement of learning and teaching, research and innovation;*
- *the quality assurance of the programmes and their alignment with the relevant HQA Standards;*
- *the effective organisation of services and the development and maintenance of infrastructure;*
- *the allocation and effective management of the necessary resources for the operation of the Institution;*
- *the development and rational allocation of human resources.*

The way in which this policy is designed, approved, implemented, monitored and revised constitutes one of the processes of the internal quality assurance system.

Institution compliance

The University of Piraeus (UniPi) has established a Quality Assurance Policy (QAP) with principles consistent with the European Higher Education Framework and the HQA guidelines. The Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS / ΕΣΔΠ) comprises a number of processes which are detailed in the Quality Manual (QM / Εγχειρίδιο Ποιότητας). The responsibility for the organization, coordination and continuous improvement of the IQAS lies with the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU / ΜΟΔΙΠ) which is a central unit responsible for the breadth of the Institutional activities associated with quality assurance policies under the supervision of the University Administration. The structure of the implemented policies, objectives, and implementation, and key monitoring and revision milestones appears as Process #1 in the QM.

Both the QM and the QAP are appropriate for the character, fields of specialty, strategic location and development opportunities of UniPi; they have been developed following the guidelines of HQA and are quite comprehensive and thorough.

The establishment of QAU and the IQAS have been approved by the UniPi Senate (28-03-2018) and published in the State Gazette (FEK #1497; 02-05-2018) in full compliance with the Institutional Laws and Regulations. The QAU disseminates the quality actions and interacts with the individual Units of the UniPi through the Internal Evaluation Committees (IEGs) who oversee data collection and coordinate the implementation of the QUA processes in the departments. The individual Departmental Councils have committed to action plans to conform to the requirements of QAU. (Three of the Departments have already completed the self-assessment process of the IQAS to the full extent and have submitted their findings together with their application for accreditation to HQA.) The IQAS is organized and carried out with due reference to protection of privacy and personal information in data collection.

The QAU communicates the QAP to the UniPi communities and stakeholders through presentations (to the Undergraduate student bodies and Departmental Faculties) and through a well-detailed and up-to-date QAU website (<https://www.unipi.gr/unipi/el/stoixeia-modip.html>) in Greek; content is not available as of yet in the English version of the website:

(<https://www.unipi.gr/unipi/en/component/k2/item/658-%CE%BC%CE%BF-%CE%B4%CE%B9-%CF%80.html>)

There was little or no evidence that the Institutions' QAP was communicated in a systematic way to the Graduate Student Body, the Alumni and the External Stakeholders; Graduate Students appeared aware of course evaluation actions, having been subjected to evaluations by students themselves in their roles as Teaching Assistants, or through course evaluations in the graduate programs they attended. Alumni and External Stakeholders appeared pleasantly surprised and very eager to be engaged with the University's actions for implementation of QAP.

In general the IQAS is in line with the Institutional Strategic goals and objectives. The stated goals of the IQAS are mapped implicitly to respective Quality Objectives of the Institution, as listed below (Process #1 of the QM) (more explicit linkage of the Institutional Quality Objectives and the Strategic goals of the IQAS would facilitate the process of feedback-motivated revisions and updating.)

Institutional Quality Objectives
1. Reinforcing the international recognition and status of the University Degrees
2. Improving the quality of academic activities with the goal to improve the educational processes and the student active participation and performance
3. Providing high level University Education and life-long learning opportunities using innovative teaching methods, including distance learning, compliant to the developments in the field of Research in Higher Education, and in accordance with internationally established criteria
4. Promoting extroversion and collaboration with Academic, Research and Community Organizations for development of the Institution and the benefit of the Society at large.
5. Improve the competitive ranking of the Institution with reference to comparable national and international Institutions
6. Improving the quality and number of the research activities of the Institution
7. Improve the culture regarding quality within the Institution.

Strategic Goals of the IQAS and the University
1. Development, dissemination and application of state-of-the-art knowledge, expansion of economic, social and technological scientific fields and continuous adaptation of programs of study to the

emerging scientific developments and societal needs, with commitment to the principles of scientific ethics
2. Provide high level university education and training to the students
3. Strengthening of human resources and developing a favorable environment that is conducive to the success of Students, Academics and Administrative staff of the Institution
4. Strengthening of research and innovation, contributing to the development of the European Space of Higher Education and Research, and the improvement of interaction and synergy between applied research and production practice.
5. Extraversion and internationalization with outreach and intensification of the international networking and strategic collaborations with academic entities, and other partners, contributing to the emerging developments in the European and international academic space, and active participation in the efforts of the international community towards development and prosperity
6. Upgrading and expansion of infrastructure and services towards achieving an optimum logistic and technologic environment for the efficient operation of the Institution
7. Strengthening of the interactions with the local community and the social impact of the Institution's actions through synergies for continuous improvement of the learning and research experiences provided, including adoption and promotion of the objectives for sustainable development and social cohesion

The QM outlines Processes and/or Action Plans to address all the criteria set out by HQA. The breakdown of Processes in specific objectives and the intended actions and Key Performance Indicators are summarized in the attached Table. These are mapped to the criteria set by HQA as listed below:

HQA criterion	ID# of the Stated Process or Quality Objective in the QM of UniPi (see the QAU's Proposal for accreditation, section 6, "Goal Setting" (Στοχοθεσία))	Compliance
Organization of the internal quality assurance system	Process #1	✓
Institution's leadership, departments and other organizational units, individual staff members and students to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance;	Quality Objective #2, Objective #3.8, #3.6, #4.8, #5.1, #5.2, #5.3, #5.5, #5.6, #6.8	✓
Integrity of academic principles and ethics, guarding against discriminations, and encouragement of external stakeholders to be involved in quality assurance	Quality Objective #1 and #3.1, #3.2, #3.7, #3.8, #5.6	✓
Continuous improvement of learning and teaching, research and innovation	Quality Objective #3.6, #1.5, #1.6, #1.7, #2.1, #2.2	✓
Quality assurance of the programs and their alignment with the relevant HQA Standards	#1.4, #4.2, #4.5, #4.6, #4.7, #4.8, Objective #7	✓
Effective organization of services and the development and maintenance of infrastructure	#3.5, #4.1, #4.3, #6.1, #6.5,	✓
Allocation and effective management of the necessary resources for the operation of the Institution	#4.10, #6.2, #6.3, #6.4, #6.6	✓

Development and rational allocation of human resources	Quality objectives #3.3, #3.4, #4.4, #5.4, #6.1, #6.2, #6.7,	✓
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The Institutions' QM includes a great range of actions and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) to ensure and verify implementation of its QAP. However, most of the partners of the Academic Community, particularly the student bodies, seem to identify QAP with a narrower scope, mainly related to Course Evaluations. It may be of value, towards improvement of the Quality Culture overall, if in subsequent communications of the scope and objectives of QAU the other aspects of the QAP are also emphasized as they are equally significant towards quality growth. Questionnaires for course evaluations are collected in paper form. Students understand very well their significance and the culture for course evaluation appears well engrained in the student experience. A participation rate of 25% - 50% has been mentioned in the meetings. Course evaluation results are communicated openly in the Departmental Councils. The University still seeks procedures by which to introduce electronic course evaluation forms while addressing anonymity and timeliness (during class).

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- 1) Communicate more thoroughly the scope and objectives of QAP to all partners and stakeholders of the community
- 2) Stress the intangible aspects of the Policy, over and beyond course evaluations
- 3) Clarify better the process by which the QAP is revised and updated based on the findings and illustrate more explicitly the relationship between IQAS goals and the Strategic Objectives of the Institution
- 4) Seek ways and identify opportunities and organizational structures by which to engage Alumni and particularly the Stakeholders in various aspects of the QAP
- 5) Implement Electronic Procedures for large volumes of data collection (e.g. course evaluations)
- 6) Communicate formally to the TA's those evaluation results that concern them.

Principle 2: Provision and Management of the Necessary Resources

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD ENSURE APPROPRIATE FUNDING FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING ACTIVITIES, RESEARCH, AND ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES IN GENERAL. RELEVANT REGULATIONS SHOULD BE IN PLACE TO ASSURE THAT ADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES FOR TEACHING AND RESEARCH ARE AVAILABLE AND READILY ACCESSIBLE (E.G. CLASSROOMS, LABORATORIES, LIBRARIES, IT INFRASTRUCTURE, PROVISION OF FREE MEALS, DORMITORIES, CAREER GUIDANCE AND SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES, ETC.).

Funding

The Institution ensures adequate funding to cover not only the overhead and operational costs (regular budget and public investment budget) but also costs related to research, innovation and development (Special Account for Research Funds, Property Development and Management Company). The financial planning and the operation of an effective financial management system constitute necessary tools for the full exploitation of the resources.

Infrastructure

Based on the requirements and needs arising during its operation, the Institution has determined ways to define, allocate and maintain all the necessary resources to ensure its smooth and proper functioning, i.e. teaching, research and auxiliary facilities, equipment and software, support facilities (cleaning, transportation, communication) etc. The scope of the IQAS should include a suitable managing and monitoring system to safeguard the infrastructure. Compliance to the internal regulations is also necessary.

Working environment

The Institution ensures -as far as possible- that the working environment has a positive effect on the performance of all members of the academic community (students and staff). Factors that are taken into consideration towards the creation of such a favorable environment are, among others, the sanitary facilities, the lighting/heating/ventilation system, the cleanliness and the overall appearance of the premises, etc. The scope of the IQAS should include an appropriate managing and monitoring system to promote a favorable working environment and to ensure compliance with the existing provisions.

Human resources

The Institution and the academic units are responsible for the human resources development.

The subject areas, as well as the competences and tasks of the staff members are defined by the corresponding job descriptions that are established within the operation scope of each academic or administrative unit. These posts are filled following the requirements set by the law, on the basis of transparent, fair and published processes. The continuous training and evaluation of the staff is considered necessary for the enhancement of the performance, which is recorded and monitored as provided in the context of the IQAS.

The Institution should acknowledge and provide the necessary resources for the implementation of the IQAS, its enhancement and the provision of services that assist the satisfaction of the quality assurance requirements. Moreover, the Institution (Quality Assurance Unit-QAU) should properly organise the administrative structure and staffing of the IQAS, with a clear allocation of competences and tasks to its staff members.

Institution compliance

Funding

The University of Piraeus funds are mainly provided by the State funding of HEIs, used for the annual operational needs, the Public Investment Funds for the purchase of large-scale equipment and the Special Accounts for Research (ELKE) funds for the managing of research and educational activities and other services.

The University recognizes the need for efficient and transparent allocation of its funds and utilizes proper tools for effective distribution and management of its funds. This goal is achieved by the use of proper economic management and information systems.

The University administration along with the Directorate of Economic Management draw the annual budget based on realistic estimates based on past experience while trying to reduce expenses and increase own income at the same time.

The ELKE has a policy for charging overheads ranging from 10% up to 25% of the budget on research projects that the faculty secure from National and European Sources. That amount is accumulated in the Institutions' reserve fund. An amount of 10% of the reserve fund is used to support several essential functions of the Institution and other research related activities (i.e., to support faculty and graduate student publications and conference participation, etc.)

Policies for these activities are Senate and ELKE approved, and are known and accessible to all faculty members through the ELKE website. These policies are clearly stated in the Guide for Research Funding of the ELKE. The administrative and financial management of ELKE is served by the Unit of Financial and Administrative Support which is comprised of academic staff proposed by the Research Committee and approved by the Senate.

The Quality Manual of the University clearly states the processes put in place for the Departments to require their funding which is to be allocated by the University Administration.

Infrastructure

The QAU of the University has put in place a procedure for determining the necessary funds for the maintenance and good function of its premises, such as teaching rooms and laboratory spaces, equipment and other support services. The University also operates a Student Mentoring & Support Service.

The buildings of the campus are well maintained and clean, indicative of the emphasis given to the quality of the working environment. However, as the AP acknowledged and was also informed by the Administration and other staff members, there is a considerable shortage of space in both teaching and laboratory facilities. The Administration is planning to utilize a former Olympic Games establishment which has been given to the University in order to expand its facilities mainly for the needs of the Graduate programs in the short term, and later to establish more spaces for use of other needs. In this regard they have taken the necessary steps towards public solicitation of bidding offers for the project and the expected date for availability of the new spaces is August 2020. Additionally, the University is in the process of negotiation with the University of Athens for rental of a nearby building to be used for faculty and admin. offices.

Maintenance of campus buildings and facilities (teaching rooms, labs and offices) is annually undertaken by external partners during the summer months or during holiday breaks. A regular maintenance program is in place for Elevators, Fire Extinguishers, Printers and Networks. The above procedures are described in the submitted proposal for accreditation for which the AP could not personally verify, however these services were found to work efficiently.

An electronic system of reporting malfunctioning equipment, lighting, or any other infrastructure problems has been put in practice and is working very efficiently, as it was reported by interviewed staff members.

Working environment

The University provides conditions that create a safe and clean environment for the students and staff. This was reflected, as the AP noticed, in the areas of sanitary facilities, all the working spaces and the surrounding areas. But there is shortage of office space in some administrative units.

The regular maintenance of the buildings contributes to the safety of the infrastructure. The IQAS has put in place a satisfactory system of managing and monitoring that ensures a proper and favorable working environment for all.

Human resources

The University of Piraeus, as other Universities in Greece, due to the State financial constraints, are usually understaffed in terms of both administrative and academic staff in many of its areas of operation.

Development of human resources is limited by the number of positions given to the University by the State. To deal with additional staffing needs the University has used a part of its overhead from the research accounts to fund contractual, limited term appointments for all of its sectors. However, owing to the zeal and competences of its staff, the educational and administrative operations of the University have not been drastically impacted. Students interviewed stated that they were satisfied with their studies and the services offered.

The QAU have made significant progress towards IQAS planning and implementation and has put in place all the necessary actions for monitoring the allocation and progression of academic and administrative staff across the University.

The QAU - through data collection and the KPIs that are in place - is able to coordinate all processes that contribute to the IQAS. An additional staff member would greatly alleviate the secretarial workload of the one person currently allocated to this unit. The University has already included in its Organizational Chart planned positions needed to staff the IQAS. Efforts should also be made to include the participation of both undergraduate and graduate students as members of the QAU and to aim for automated data collection to compensate for the limited human resources available.

Through the AP' s discussion with the chief administration officer and other administrative staff it was verified that there are several organized opportunities for staff development and training. The QAU has appropriate processes for monitoring the opportunities and the participation of the staff in various training workshops in Greece and abroad through the Erasmus+ staff training programs.

Panel judgement

Principle 2: Provision & Management of the Necessary Resources	
2.1 Funding	
Fully compliant	x
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
2.2 Infrastructure	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	x
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

2.3 Working Environment	
Fully compliant	x
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
2.4 Human Resources	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	x
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Principle 2: Provision & Management of the Necessary Resources (overall)	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	x
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- 1) The Central Administration has already begun the necessary actions in order to start the works necessary in the Olympic facilities at Nikaia that are provided to the UniPi for expansion of its facilities. At the same time they may want to consider making provisions for easy access and transportation to the new venue.
- 2) The Central Administration should also try to acquire and hire both academic and administrative staff in order to ease the workload of both for the sake of improving quality in the services and the education that it offers. In this regard it is recognized that the ultimate approval for state-funded positions lies with the Ministry of Education.

Principle 3: Establishing Goals for Quality Assurance

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD HAVE CLEAR AND EXPLICIT GOALS REGARDING THE ASSURANCE AND CONTINUOUS UPGRADE OF THE QUALITY OF THE OFFERED PROGRAMMES, THE RESEARCH AND INNOVATION ACTIVITIES, AS WELL AS THE SCIENTIFIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES. THESE GOALS MAY BE QUALITATIVE OR QUANTITATIVE AND REFLECT THE INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGY.

The Institution's strategy on quality assurance should be translated into time-specific, qualitative and quantitative goals which are regularly monitored, measured and reviewed in the context of the IQAS operation, and following an appropriate procedure.

Examples of quality goals:

- *rise of the average annual graduation rate of the Institution's Undergraduate Programmes to x%;*
- *upgrade of the learning environment through the introduction of digital applications on*;
- *improvement of the ratio of scientific publications to teaching staff members to*;
- *rise of the total research funding to y%*

The goals are accompanied by a specific action plan for their achievement, and entail the participation of all stakeholders.

Institution compliance

Establishing relevant, timely, measurable and achievable goals is pivotal for the effective operation of the QAU. The latter has made a significant attempt to develop a Strategic Plan on Quality Assurance including specific goals for the Study Programmes offered by the University, the teaching methods that are used, research and innovation, administration and resources. All these goals are clearly described in a dedicated Annex entitled “Στοχοθεσία Ποιότητας του Πανεπιστημίου”. They are well identified, realistic and many of them are critical for the smooth running of the Institution's operation. All of them have a target date on a yearly basis, which is currently the 30th of June 2020; the QAU has provided reasonable explanations for choosing the above date.

All goals are accompanied by specific action plans for their achievement and entail the participation of Institution's key stakeholders, i.e., the faculty and students. It appears that the defined goals are consistent with the HQA template and are adapted to the specificities of the University. The quality goals are in line with the Institutional strategy as they were approved by the Senate following the submission by the QAU. The QAU is represented in the Senate through the Vice-Rector of Academic Affairs who is by virtue the chairman of the Unit. Thus, there is a direct communication link between the work done by the QAU and the strategic goals of the University at a high level.

All goals are paired with relevant and appropriate KPIs. The QAU has adopted the KPIs provided by HQA but it also developed additional 48 indicators associated with the seven strategic goals of the Institution. However, KPIs related to Research and Innovation need to be further elaborated. The new indicators are in the process of continuous verification through the use of the SMART tool (Specific, Measurable, Applicable, Relevant, Time Bound) dedicated for planning and achieving goals.

The AP noted that many of the goals set were modest. This conservative approach taken by QAU may be attributed to the fact that this, being a newly established process that seeks to change the basic principles of the culture of the system, it was deemed preferable to set achievable goals. Some of the KPIs, however, are optimistic, such as the one concerning the average annual percentage of students

participating in the practical training (internship) where the target is set to increase threefold (in one year) without convincing justification. This, however, may be interpreted as an indication of the willingness of the University to encourage and strengthen links with industry and to also increase the employability of the graduates. Such an achievement will also satisfy the expressed interests of the stakeholders.

Panel judgement

Principle 3: Establishing Goals for Quality Assurance	
3.1 Study Programmes/education activities	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
3.2 Research & Innovation	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
3.3 Administration (funding, human resources, infrastructure management)	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
3.4 Resources (funding, human resources, infrastructure)	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Principle 3: Establishing Goals for Quality Assurance (overall)	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

1. It is positive that the quality goals and the associated KPIs provided in the Annex 6, were selected from the pool of quality goals and KPIs suggested by HQA and have been further enriched with additional new ones reflecting the specificities, strengths and weaknesses of the University. However, the AP recommends that this approach be continued through an effort to achieve an

improved pairing of KPIs with goals, especially with regards to the strategic goal concerning the outreach and internationalization of the University.

2. The AP considers that in the quality assurance procedures referring to problem reporting, the methods, time margins to address/solve these problems and follow up actions, should be clearly indicated.
3. A feedback concerning the endorsement of any suggestions and/or solutions to any problems reported in student questionnaires and staff satisfaction surveys, should be communicated to the stakeholders concerned. This will motivate them to continue giving their own feedback in the future.

Principle 4: Structure, Organisation and Operation of the IQAS

INSTITUTIONS SET UP AND ESTABLISH AN INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM, WHICH INCLUDES PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES COVERING ALL AREAS OF ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES AND FUNCTIONS. SPECIAL FOCUS IS GIVEN ON THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING, INCLUDING THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT, RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND GOVERNANCE.

The key goal of the internal quality assurance system (IQAS) is the development, effective operation and continuous improvement of the whole range of the Institution's activities, and particularly, of teaching, research, innovation, governance and relevant services, according to the international practices - especially those of the European Higher Education Area - and the HQA principles and guidelines described in these Standards.

Structure and organisation

In each Institution, the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) holds the responsibility for the administration and management of the IQAS. The QAU is set up according to the existing legislative framework and is responsible for:

- the development of specialised policy, strategy and relevant processes towards the continuous improvement of the quality of the Institution's work and provisions;*
- the organisation, operation and continuous improvement of the Institution's internal quality assurance system;*
- the coordination and support of the evaluation process of the Institution's academic units and other services, and;*
- the support of the external evaluation and accreditation process of the Institution's programmes and internal quality assurance system in the context of the HQA principles and guidelines.*

The Institution's IQAS and its implementation processes are determined by the decisions of the competent bodies, as provided by the law, and are published in the Government Gazette, as well as on the Institution's website. The above are reviewed every six years, at the latest.

To achieve the above goals, the QAU collaborates with HQA, develops and maintains a management information system to store the evaluation data, which are periodically submitted to HQA, according to the latter's instructions. The QAU is responsible for the systematic monitoring of the evaluation process and for the publication of evaluation-related procedures and their results on the Institution's website.

The QAU structure has been approved by the Institution's competent bodies, as provided by the law, while all competences and tasks accruing from this structure are clearly defined.

Operation

The Institution takes action for the design, establishment, implementation, audit and maintenance of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS), taking into account the Standards' requirements, while making any necessary amendments to ensure fitness to achieve its aims.

The above actions include:

- provision of all necessary processes and procedures for the successful operation of the IQAS, as well as implementation of the above processes and procedures on all of the Institution's parties involved ;the Institution's areas of activity can constitute the IQAS processes, e.g. teaching, research and innovation, governance, services etc. An IQAS process is an area of activity including data input, data processing and outputs. A procedure defines the way an action is implemented and includes a course of stages or steps, e.g. the curriculum design procedure;*
- determination of how the IQAS procedures / processes are audited, measured and assessed, and how they interact;*
- provision of all necessary resources to enable the IQAS function.*

Documentation

The IQAS documentation includes, among other things, a series of key documents demonstrating its structure and organisation, such as the Quality Manual, which describes how the Standards' requirements are met.

The Annexes of the Quality Manual include:

- *the Quality Policy and the Quality Assurance Objectives;*
- *the necessary written Procedures, along with the entailed forms;*
- *the necessary Guides, External Documents (e.g. pertinent legislation), as well as any other supporting data;*
- *the standing organisational structure of the QAU, with a detailed description of the competences, the required qualifications and the goals for each post. The organisational chart is structured in a manner that ensures that the IQAS organisational requirements are fully and properly met.*

Institution compliance

The University has established and set up the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) and assigned to it the responsibility for the administration and management of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS). The QAU structure has been approved by the Institution's competent bodies, as provided by the law (Senate of the University, 28/03/2018) while all competences and tasks accruing from this structure are clearly defined. The current composition of the QAU is not in full compliance with the existing legislative framework as far as students' representation is concerned.

The main principles, processes and structures of the Institution's IQAS are detailed in the QM which is well-articulated and very comprehensive. It is up-to date and appropriate and includes justified methods to achieve the quality objectives set out in the Quality Policy. It is also appropriately customized to properly reflect the specific features of the University.

The Quality Manual is organized across eight high-level principles which are further analysed under the following headings:

1. Institution Policy for Quality Assurance
2. Provision and Management of the Necessary Resources
3. Establishing Goals for Quality Assurance
4. Structure, Organisation and Operation of the IQAS
5. Self-Assessment
6. Collection of Quality Data: Measuring, Analysis and Improvement
7. Public Information
8. External Evaluation and Accreditation of the IQAS

For each of the above principles, the following aspects are defined and properly detailed: objectives, input data (information), output data (information, actions), related administration process and required resources, performance indicators, control and update procedures, improvement actions, and procedures. It also includes terminology and acronyms. The procedures included in the QM are sufficiently supported by the appropriate documentation. Detailed forms and related templates are included for input data and reporting. The QM includes such a form and templates for Principle No. 4 and its relevant sub-processes. Following a request, the AP was provided with a set of completed forms and templates for Principle No. 4, demonstrating their applicability.

The AP was provided with the legislative framework governing the QAU as well as with its organizational chart. The AP feels that the structure of the QAU is appropriate and sound and the description of the staff positions in the QAU's organisational chart is adequately detailed and properly justified. Currently, the QAU consists of the chair and the five faculty members and it is staffed with a person providing administrative support. The AP feels that the QAU is understaffed in terms of permanent support personnel. The QAU members are loaded with many other duties within the University. This may hamper their continued effective participation and their contribution to the unit's operation, despite their appreciable efforts.

Panel judgement

Principle 4: Structure, Organization and Operation of the IQAS	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

1. The Institution should make all necessary arrangements to provide for the representation of students in the QAU as foreseen in the relevant law, since the students are a key component of the Quality Assurance Policy of every academic institution. The Student Associations should be motivated to define their representatives in QAU.
2. The Institution should increase its efforts to staff the vacant positions of the administrative personnel, namely one Statistical Analyst and one Support Specialist for the IT system, as soon as possible.
3. The University should establish effective ways of involving stakeholders in the formulation of its quality policies as well as in the development/revision of the course programmes and curricula.

Principle 5: Self-Assessment

THE INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM COMPRISES PROCEDURES PROVIDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ANNUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT OF THE INSTITUTION'S ACADEMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS, ADDRESSING AREAS OF OVERSIGHTS OR SHORTCOMINGS, AND DEFINING REMEDIAL ACTIONS TOWARDS THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE SET GOALS, AND EVENTUAL IMPROVEMENT.

The QAU conducts, on an annual basis, a self-assessment of the IQAS, following the written procedure provided for each area of activity, which is implemented by a certain academic or administrative unit, as appropriate. The procedure determines the timing, the participants, the data under consideration, and the expected outcomes. The self-assessment aims at a final estimation of the suitability of the IQAS in force, as well as at basing decisions concerning the necessary remedial or precautionary actions for improvement.

The data considered in the context of the self-assessment of a programme may, for example, include:

- *students performance;*
- *feedback from students / teaching staff;*
- *assessment of learning outcomes;*
- *graduation rates;*
- *feedback from the evaluation of the facilities / learning environment;*
- *report of any remedial or precautionary actions undertaken;*
- *suggestions for improvement.*

The outcomes of the self-assessment are recorded in internal reports drawn up by the QAU. The reports identify any areas of deviation or non-compliance with the Standards, and are communicated to the interested parties (if appropriate). The Institution's resolutions concerning any modification, compliance, or enhancement of the IQAS operation might include actions related to:

- *the upgrade of the IQAS and the pertinent processes;*
- *the upgrade of the services offered to the students;*
- *the reallocation of resources;*
- *the introduction of new quality goals, etc.*

The outcomes of the self-assessment are recorded and, along with the source data, are archived as quality files.

A special procedure is followed for the compliance check of newly launched programmes (of all three cycles), or programmes that are to be reviewed shortly, prior to the institutional approval of the programme.

Institution compliance

The QAU and the OMEA have developed a very effective synergy towards elaboration of specific actions in the IQAS that address the core of the principles set by HQA. The members of the QAU have made an outstanding effort, having developed in a relatively short time a very thorough and well documented IQAS that is adapted to the special characteristics, profile, and mission of the UniPi. These characteristics derive from the Institution's strategic location in the seafaring City of Piraeus, the location of the largest port in Greece and an important entrance point of international commerce in Europe, the emphasis of

the curriculum on Finance, Economics, Policy Development, Banking and Information Technologies, Risk-Management, Statistical Sciences, Industrial Processes and Sea-Transport. The Institution appears to have access to a significant group of stakeholders that are representative of the affiliated industries that the programs of study are designed to address and as such it has unique opportunities for contributions of these industries to the implementation of its QAP through various channels (including student internships, research and development consortia with industry, and development of international relations).

According to the IQAS of UniPi there is an annual self-assessment exercise to be undertaken by all the academic and administrative units of the university over the breadth of its activities. The IQAS envisions top-down and bottom-up procedures for data collection and returned feedback that would be used to updating the QAP. However, not all the processes have been tested to a full cycle as of yet, due to the limited time the system has been placed in operation.

The IQAS of UniPi intends to evolve into an anthropocentric system whose discourse and actions are targeted towards an improved student learning experience. The core of the IQAS is a protocol of operation which follows the structure:

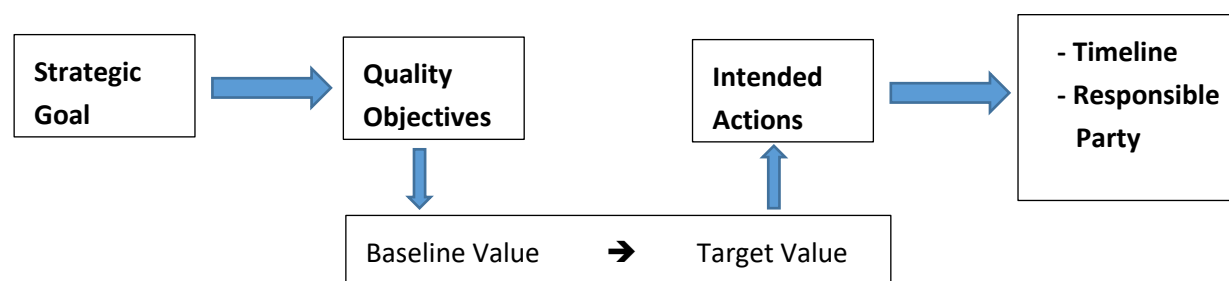


Figure 5.1: *Flowchart of Self-Assessment carried out in each Academic Unit*

Of the various quality objectives (about 110 in total) about 48 are quantified by Key Performance Indicators (KPI) that are specific to UniPi (identified as $E\Delta$ in Section 6 of the QM); the remainder are defined according with the HQA manual (KPI's identified as Δ in Section 6 of the QM). An extensive process of data collection is conducted for each of the KPI's through questionnaires that are filled out by students and by the Academic Units.

Some of the KPI's have baseline values that originate from data collected in the previous years where assessment has been made; no value implies that the corresponding indicator is recently introduced in the assessment process. It is noteworthy that target values are very conservative and generally very close to the baseline values, whereas the timeline to attainment is a year from today (June 30, 2020). A process for re-evaluation and feedback is also envisioned in the manual, and some samples of recommendations have been derived as a result of the self-assessment process for 2019 (e.g. department of Banking & Financial Management). Some conclusions of that process include the need for improved mobility of students, improved facilities, election of a student representative in the QAU, improved analysis of the data collected from student course evaluations, enhancing the funding sources of the department, and hiring of specialized Administrative Assistants and Faculty Members. Another example of self-assessment, from the Department of Industrial Management and Technology has led to conclusions regarding the structure and proposals for restructuring of the Undergraduate Program of Study, namely (a) The introduction of pre-requisite chains of courses, and (b) the introduction of electives as early as in the third year of study in order to better streamline areas of specialization.

However, most of the experience from the other departments occurs mainly along the route from left to right in Figure 5.1; the reversal of the process needed in order to revise and update is still vague as a result of limited experience in the workings of remediation.

All the procedures set out by the IQAS are available through the University Portal in the website of QAU: <https://www.unipi.gr/unipi/el/aksiologhshs/eswterikh-aksiologhsh.html>. The website also includes self-assessment reports from earlier cycles of evaluation (2015); the fact that both the external evaluation and self-assessment reports are visible on the Institution's website acts as a catalyst for change and improvement. In the same direction the discussion of course evaluations in the Departmental Councils encourages harmonization of teaching methods over the breadth of the program.

The self-assessment process is based on 8 processes that secure an Institution-wide mapping and evaluation of data. The core of the data collection is carried out in Process #4 (Self-Assessment). Data collection is conducted in the form of Questionnaires receiving detailed input from the following Units / Entities:

(a) Course Evaluations

(b) Data from the various systems:

- From the Internship Providers (questions regarding the performance of the interns) and the Interns (questions regarding their training experience)
- From the International Relations and Mobility Unit (ERASMUS) – (questions regarding the mobility experience, learning, facilitation, accommodation)
- From the data collection system of the QAU
- From the Departmental Secretariats Regarding the Programs of Study (students are requested to fill out the questionnaires regarding the programs of study upon graduation and provide information regarding the workload, program objectives, skills and competencies attained, and quality of the supporting units, facilities and infrastructures).
- From the Student Registry (data regarding rates of graduation, student demographics, GPAs etc).
- Data regarding the state of technical facilities, labs, library, and Infrastructure
- Data regarding the personnel
- Data from the Special Account for Research Funds (ELKE)
- Data from the Financial Management Office.
- Data regarding the Research Activity (number of research programs, number of research publications, citations, presentations, monographs)

An innovative component of the self-assessment process is also the introduction of an evaluation form of the various departmental websites, which has led to improvements and will help towards harmonization of information available across different faculties and departments. Based on discussions with student groups and alumni there is clear evidence that course evaluation results have led to noticeable improvements of the curricula of study, delivery, exploitation of the opportunities offered by technology (e-class, presentations) and instructor performance and availability. Also, the evaluations have led to improvements of the programs by the introduction of other learning activities (e.g. tutorials, labs, and projects). In this regard, graduate students are essential and somehow the issue of compensation of this work might need to be considered in the future (some graduate students indicated that they perform this work on a voluntary basis with no compensation).

Panel judgement

Principle 5: Self-Assessment	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- 1) The procedures for improvement (remedial actions) in QM could be improved and described in greater detail in order to facilitate remediation and to lead to concrete results in a uniform manner. As they stand now the procedures are stated in abstract form and are subject to interpretation.
- 2) Questionnaires for evaluation of facilities and required equipment could be enhanced to enable information on opportunities for equipment sharing, merging and optimization of resources and rationalization of investment priorities for the procurement of equipment.
- 3) Data regarding innovation and international presence would also be useful in the branding activities of UniPi.
- 4) The Administration should explore ways to compensate at a higher level the Graduate Student Teaching Assistants for their services as instructors.

Principle 6: Collection of Quality Data: Measuring, Analysis and Improvement

INSTITUTIONS ARE FULLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND USE OF INFORMATION IN AN INTEGRATED, FUNCTIONAL AND READILY ACCESSIBLE MANNER, AIMING AT THE EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF THE QUALITY DATA RELATED TO TEACHING, RESEARCH AND OTHER ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES, AS WELL AS OF THOSE RELATED TO THE ADMINISTRATION.

The QAU should establish and operate an information system to manage the data required for the implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System.

The QAU measures and monitors the performance of the various activities of the Institution, through appropriate procedures established in the context of the IQAS structure, and assesses their level of effectiveness. The measuring and monitoring is conducted on a basis of indices and data provided by HQA in the pertinent guidelines and forms, which are part of the National Information System for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (NISQA). These measurements may concern: the size of the student body, the size of the teaching and administrative staff, the infrastructure, the structural components of the curricula, students' performance, research activity performance, financial data, feedback on student and faculty satisfaction surveys, data related to the teaching and research activity, services, infrastructure, etc.

The QAU makes use of the figures and presents the results for consideration using statistical analysis. Outcomes are displayed through histograms and charts. This sort of information is used by the Institution for decision making, at all levels, pursuing improvement, as well as for setting, monitoring, assessing and reviewing the Institution's strategic and operational goals.

Institution compliance

Data collection, analysis, and use are foreseen in the IQAS through a dedicated high-level process in the QM (Process #5). The AP studied the evaluation package submitted by the University of Piraeus and, through the onsite visit, a verification of the appropriateness and actual implementation of these procedures was attempted.

Data concerning the evaluation of **teaching methods** and the quality of individual courses are collected from students. The data collection tool (i.e. student questionnaire) covers questions on teaching quality, course materials, infrastructure and focuses on the teacher's approach to the course. Hardcopies of evaluation questionnaires are distributed to the students for the course evaluation approximately two weeks before the end of classes. This assessment is carried out in a strictly anonymous manner, where a specific member of the University's Secretariat (i.e. administrative personnel), in the absence of the academic involved with the course, distributes to the students and collects the questionnaire sheets during lecture periods. The questionnaires are scanned and digitized through dedicated software (i.e. remark OMR software).

The Accreditation Panel has verified, via meetings with faculty, students and alumni, that this procedure is adequate, ongoing, and continuously updated/improved. This process has proven invaluable, since it has led to significant improvements/changes in specific courses, as attested by faculty, alumni, and students alike.

Each individual staff member from the academic cohort is self-evaluated once a year, providing information on courses taught, supervision of students, laboratory sessions supervised, number of publications, relevant research data, administrative duties, etc. **Innovation outcome** of teaching staff is assembled from the activities reported in annual individual self-assessments to Departments and is reported in terms of a number of indices.

No specific procedure concerning **administrative staff evaluation** has been identified in the IQAS beyond the routine procedures enacted by the State Code for public servants. However, there is a procedure in place for the evaluation of **Programs of Study**. This, also anonymous procedure, employs another structured questionnaire that is administered in the end of studies and before the official graduation of students. In the evaluation questionnaire for the Programs of Study, there are some items that provide a small insight into the performance of administrative personnel and support services.

Up to date, data related to the availability and accessibility of **infrastructure**, such as **equipment, social services** and **IT facilities**, is recorded by some Academic Departments but in a non-unified manner. Data on the equipment of four Departments has been provided. A centralized system for the collection of information related to infrastructure, equipment, and IT facilities may prove invaluable to the University's Administration, for better planning, management and resource sharing.

There is no evidence of an existing template for addressing evaluation issues on the **finances** of the University. However, available financial statements on expenditures may serve towards that end.

Data is collected through a series of regular assessments and reports, surveys (often conducted through the use of such tools as structured questionnaires), through dedicated data management systems of the university, and information systems that are managed by other institutions.

Some of the specific systems and methods identified as being used for the collection of data by the University are the following:

- a. Questionnaires → remark OMR software
- b. The ΟΠΕΣΠ information system
- c. The Students Information System (SIS) used by the Departmental and University Secretariats (i.e. φοιτητολόγιο),
- d. An information system dedicated to funded Research Activity (i.e. ΕΛΚΕ),
- e. A management system used by the Financial Services of the University,
- f. The HORIZON Library Information System,
- g. The ATLAS information management system, which is dedicated to the practical / industrial training (internships) of students.
- h. The databases and information management systems of the Academia / Industry Liaison Office
- i. Other databases of individual services and academic units of the university.

The accuracy and reliability of collected data is verified by way of collection, the anonymity of participating students in the evaluation of individual courses and programs of study, as well as by the large volume of data collected through the years, that allow for statistical comparisons and monitoring of the progress of certain programs, courses, or instructors. Further, random sampling of such information as course outlines and ECTS credits is already in place and has served as a means of evaluating the accuracy and reliability of data. These procedures should be documented better.

Student satisfaction surveys take several forms (i.e. Course evaluation, Program of Study survey, Alumni survey), as these were elaborated in Section 1, above. The results of these surveys are discussed openly in Departmental meetings and corrective actions are suggested. As confirmed by students and alumni alike, this process has led to improvements in elements of courses that were identified.

No staff satisfaction surveys have been identified and should thus be developed and put into place.

The accreditation proposal did not contain data presentation in graphs so as to easily demonstrate trends that allow direct interpretation and comparisons with similar institutions. However, data referring to student evaluations of individual courses, research reports of the faculty, programs of study, alumni status, among others, were readily provided by the University's QAU upon request. Several graphs allowing inter-Department and University-wide comparisons are automatically produced from software that is used to record data (i.e. course evaluations).

The Accreditation Panel recognizes the effort already put forth and encourages the QAU to implement possibly missing electronic reports so that future evaluations are statistically presented and interpreted for direct comparisons and used in the self-assessment reports of the academic units.

No meaningful analysis and evaluation of data pertaining to the availability and accessibility (including functionality) of equipment and IT facilities has been identified. The only evaluation of data is obtained from pertinent elements included in the surveys of Programs of Study. With the introduction of a centralized system for the collection of information related to infrastructure, equipment, and IT facilities (better articulated in Section 1c above), a coupled analysis and evaluation system (possibly including a purchase prioritization rubric), is also needed. However, having said these, it should be noted that the QAU has implemented a careful SWOT analysis approach in the process of drafting key strategic goals for the QAP, as well as for drafting the associated KPIs and pertinent targets.

Currently, no formal monitoring procedure has been presented or identified. However, a procedure that will allow the monitoring of suitability, adequacy and effectiveness of collected data is currently being planned by the University's QAU. This procedure will use such elements as the examination of deviation of target values from the real outcomes in the various strategic goals put forth. Any significant deviation identified will result in specific corrective actions that will be suggested to the appropriate units/departments of the University.

There is strong evidence that the University has taken measures to adhere to the recommendations of the external reviews for both the Institution and its various Academic Departments. Many of those recommendations were effectively adopted as processes and procedures of the IQAS and are stated in the Quality Manual. The high quality of the documents presented to the Accreditation Panel may serve as proof of the remarkable attempt of the Institution members to adhere to quality measures and indicators, as well as of their dedication to continuous improvement.

Key data and associated indicators have been set out and foreseen as input to setting and reviewing the University's strategic and operational goals. However, there is little evidence that this process has been implemented yet in its entirety.

It seems that the majority of these indicators is heavily influenced by the indicators suggested by HQA and do not necessarily transcribe to the direct needs of the Institution. Additional indicators contributed by the University have been defined through the "SMART" approach (as this was elaborated in the IQAS) and have followed both a top-down and bottom-up approach in their final selection and definition of numerical performance indicators.

Panel judgement

Principle 6: Collection of Data: Measuring, Analysis & Improvement	
6.1 Study Programmes / education activities	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
6.2 Research & Innovation	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
6.3 Activities related to the administration (funding, human resources, infrastructure management)	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
6.4 Human Resources	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Principle 6: Collection of Data: Measuring, Analysis & Improvement (overall)	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

1. A centralized system for the collection of information related to infrastructure, equipment, and IT facilities may prove invaluable to the University's Administration, for better planning and management of such resources (i.e. purchases, maintenance). Such a system should include an analysis and evaluation procedure (including a purchase/maintenance prioritization rubric, which could be coupled with financial services databases).
2. Staff satisfaction recording mechanisms should be put into place and properly documented in the Quality Manual.
3. Better performance indicators and ways of capturing, analyzing and presenting the evaluation data should be considered by IQAS and properly documented in the Quality Manual.

4. The processes used by the Institution for monitoring, assessing and reviewing its Strategic and Operational Goals and Procedures should also be incorporated in the IQAS.
5. Data collected through the various procedures should be more clearly analyzed and presented (with the use of pertinent graphs and tables to present findings being an imperative). Publication of these results in the website would be useful, unless they pertain to sensitive information, as this is determined by the University's Administration.

Principle 7: Public Information

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD PUBLISH INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR TEACHING AND ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES IN A DIRECT AND ACCESSIBLE MANNER. ALL PERTINENT INFORMATION SHOULD BE UP-TO-DATE, CLEAR AND OBJECTIVE.

The QAU publishes data related to IQAS structure, organisation and operation. Furthermore, the QAU publishes data pertinent to the institutional quality policy and objectives, as well as information and data relevant to the Institution's internal and external evaluation. In the context of the self-assessment process, the QAU verifies that adequate information regarding the teaching activities and, particularly, the programmes' profile and the overall institutional activity is publicly available. QAU makes recommendations for improvement, where appropriate.

Institution compliance

The overall picture of the website (i.e. the main avenue for public information) of the University of Piraeus is quite positive. The website has breadth and depth of information. Information provided is useful to current and/or prospective students, as well as to other visitors. In addition, the University has implemented a procedure that allows the evaluation of the quality of its website (through the use of a specially designed questionnaire – made available to the Accreditation Panel) and, therefore, its continuous future improvement.

The information made available through the website of the University was much more extensive than that provided in the evaluation package submitted to HQA's Panel.

The site is not difficult to navigate, especially when compared to websites of other academic institutions worldwide. However, some of the information may not be as easy to locate, possibly due to the breadth of information made available.

Further, many of the pages of the University's central site provide links to other websites maintained independently by academic and other departments. This approach results in the loss of the uniformity of web information, as this was witnessed in the entry page of the University.

Finally, there is a systematic lack of detailed information in English, except for specific departments and units of the university (i.e. International Office). This could be attributed to the fact that most of the information provided in many of the sites / pages of Departments caters to a Greek-speaking audience. However, this shortcoming must still be addressed.

Information about teaching and academic activities is publicly accessible via the Institution's website. Included in this information are the following items:

- a. **Schools and Academic Departments**, their programs of study, their structures, faculty, laboratories and their research activities.
- b. **Research activities** are also publicized through a separate website (<http://www.kep.unipi.gr>) through which detailed information about the University's 1) official research laboratories, 2) currently-running activities (including doctoral and post-doctoral projects), 3) fully updated announcements and news, 4) rules, regulations, pertinent forms, 5) a separate "E-Services"-page is available for the University's researchers, and 6) useful links to related activities/services, including the Academia-Industry Liaison Office and a webpage dedicated to the "Practical/Industrial Training" (i.e., Internships) of students (the latter is well developed including relevant forms, information, links, and procedures).

On the negative side, none of the information on the Research Center website is available in English.

- c. Several of the **Departments maintain their own websites**. Links to those websites are provided through the central page of the University. Some Departmental sites are better developed than others. Specific examples of some of these differences are further elaborated in Section 2b, below. Some information is missing from the pages of some Departments (i.e. course outlines in a form that associates workhours to ECTS credits). For example, the Dept. of Economics has a more streamlined presentation of their course outlines in comparison to the Dept. of Industrial Management and Technology. Also, and this being of utmost importance, some Departmental websites do not have any information available in English (e.g. Dept. of Industrial Management and Technology).
- d. While information and separate websites for such activities as the **Practical/Industrial Training of students** exists, it is **not available in English** and it cannot be easily located. Also pertaining to the page/site dedicated to the Practical / Industrial Training of students, and following up on a recommendation made by one of the external stakeholders interviewed during the visit of the Accreditation Panel, the creation of a database that will include student analytics that can be viewed by companies could enhance the recruitment process of graduates.

Information regarding the curriculum structures and study guides of the various degrees and programs of the University is available online, with the exception of some (e.g. Department of Maritime Studies), which could be attributed to dead links on the website. However, there are several shortcomings that are, often, stemming from the fact that Academic Departments maintain their own websites. The following are provided as examples of these shortcomings:

- a. Inconsistent presentation of information, which contributes to added difficulty in locating key information.
- b. Dissimilarities in the manner in which similar information is presented. For instance, course outlines of certain departments are provided in a format that explains the derivation of the ECTS credits for each course, while for other courses this is lacking. Further, some course outlines are provided in MSWord format, others in PDF format, and others as text within the website (in some cases in pull-down menus).
- c. Absence of curriculum structures and study guides for some graduate programs of study (e.g. MSc in Maritime Studies).
- d. The AP found that the allocation of ECTS to courses taught in some Departments is not considered satisfactory and according to set rules, therefore they should be carefully reconsidered. On the other hand, the issuing of the Diploma Supplement (DS) is applied and made available to all students upon graduation by all Departments.

The CVs of faculty members and other academic staff are available online. Curriculum structure and courses are available on Departmental websites. Modes of attendance and the criteria for student assessment are provided through the course outlines.

Academic-staff CVs do not appear in a specific format.

The fees for most postgraduate programs of study are difficult to locate (if present) online.

Information pertaining to Quality Assurance and to such units as the University's Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) is available in great detail on the University's website, through a dedicated site/page to the QAU and the IQAS (<https://www.unipi.gr/unipi/el/administration/modip3.html>). Again, a shortcoming that must be addressed is the fact that this in-depth information is not available in English.

Published information is clear and quite easily accessible. Most of the information is up-to-date. In cases where information provided online looks outdated may be attributed to the fact that this is the most up-to-date, and binding version of a certain document (i.e. Funding Guide of ELKE of 2011).

Panel judgment

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

Panel Recommendations

The AP Recommendations are provided in two separate categories, as follows:

- 1) Recommendations of primary importance. These are items that, according to the Panel's judgment, must be incorporated in future changes/updates and that may directly affect the outcome of future evaluations.
- 2) Recommendations of secondary importance. These are items that may not be deemed as imperative for incorporation in future changes / improvements. However, their consideration would still help improve both the quality and the means of presenting publicly available information.

Recommendations of Primary Importance

1. Some curriculum structures and study guides for some graduate programs of study are missing (e.g. MSc in Maritime Studies). All webpages of programs of study must be carefully revisited and updated.
2. Information provided through websites/webpages of several Units or Academic Departments of the University are not available in English. For example, information pertaining to Quality Assurance and to such units as the University's Quality Assurance Unit (QAU), the University's Research Center, or to the Department of Industrial Management and Technology must be made available in English.
3. Information available in Greek is much more detailed when compared to information available in English. This weakness should be addressed through possibly a more precise mapping of the information in both languages.
4. Provide key information, which are common among all Departments, (i.e. Programs of Study, Academic staff CVs, Course Outlines, Program Guides, etc.) in a uniform manner.
5. Re-evaluation of ECTS in the courses taught in Departments that have not already done so, in a rational manner.

Recommendations of Secondary Importance

1. Links to the websites of Research Laboratories could be provided through the University's Research Center website.
2. Several of the currently-running research programs may be maintaining their own websites. It may be advisable to provide links to those sites, for visitors who may want to learn more about a specific activity. Those links can be provided through the page of the Research Center that lists all current research activity (<http://www.kep.unipi.gr/plaisio-leitourgias/diaxeirish-poiiothtas/energa-programmata>).
3. When linking to a Department's separate website (from the University's central page) it would be better if a new tab is used, since it is difficult to subsequently return back to the University's central website.

4. Pertaining to the page/site dedicated to the Practical / Industrial Training (Internship) of students, the creation of a database that will include student analytics that can be viewed by companies could enhance the recruitment process of graduates.

Principle 8: External Evaluation and Accreditation of the IQAS

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD BE PERIODICALLY EVALUATED BY COMMITTEES OF EXTERNAL EXPERTS SET BY HQA, FOR THE PURPOSE OF ACCREDITATION OF THEIR INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS (IQAS). THE PERIODICITY OF THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION IS DETERMINED BY HQA.

External quality assurance, in the case in point external evaluation aiming at accreditation, may act as a means of verification of the effectiveness of the Institution's internal quality assurance, and as a catalyst for improvement, while opening new perspectives. Additionally, it can provide information with a view to public acknowledgement of the positive course of the Institution's activities.

The Higher Education Institutions engage in periodic external quality assurance which is conducted taking into consideration any special requirements set by the legislation governing the operation of the Institutions and their academic units.

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

Institution compliance

The AP has determined that the student body, faculty and administrative staff engage actively in the IQAS procedure as set by HQA. During the meetings with the University Administration, the QAU, the OMEAs it was found that there is an embedded tradition for course-evaluation that has begun more than 10 years ago, whereas reports for self evaluation focusing mostly on courses and student demographics for 2015-16, 2016-17, and 2017-18 are available. However, the current effort to implement the HQA guidelines begun in 2018 with the appointment of the current QAU and the new University Administration that is fully supportive and endorses the endeavor.

The QAU has made an outstanding effort in building the IQAS well beyond the ordinary. The IQAS envisions yearly data collection and processing for close monitoring of quality growth. However, because of the short duration of its implementation in its current form, it is still early to assess the effectiveness of the IQAS actions. Longer term trends that would be available over a multi-year period would give a more productive picture of possible remedial actions needed.

A primary finding is that the effort itself, conducted by the QAU and the OMEAs, has engaged successfully the entirety of the Administrative staff and students in the process, which in itself has produced a quality culture. Notable exceptions are the peripheral communities such as Alumni and external Stakeholders who, although eager, do not seem to have been engaged, as of yet, in the quality assurance processes and seemed unaware of the IQAS. Both groups, but particularly the stakeholders had several proposals in the manner they could be engaged in quality actions. Owing to the timing of the visit, it was not possible to also determine the commitment and degree of engagement of the faculty members beyond the OMEAs.

The UniPi has undergone an institutional evaluation in 2015, and also all departments passed an external evaluation in previous years. This is the first quality assurance accreditation for the QAU of the University. The UniPi has drafted and submitted effectively a follow-up report in direct response to the last institutional evaluation by the HQA. The report mentions that the institution has addressed successfully all the recommendations for improvement.

From the interviews of the AP with all staff members it became evident that all are aware of their role and importance of the IQAS external review and its contribution to an effective improvement and betterment of the quality overall.

The stakeholders (industrial and governance) of the University were enthusiastically engaged during the accreditation procedure and seemed eager to continue for any follow up actions regarding the quality assurance.

Panel judgement

Principle 8: External Evaluation & Accreditation of the IQAS	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

1. Formalize communication channels between the Institution and stakeholders beyond the ad-hoc relations they already have with members of the teaching staff. This is especially important for external stakeholders, such as industry and public sector organizations.
2. Engage further the student, alumni and external stakeholders as strategic partners to the Institution.
3. This may require initiatives beyond mere communication of activities – and could be translated to options (buttons) on the website for specific stakeholders beyond the simple contact information (e.g. some have asked access to pertinent analytics in order to provide specific, or targeted information about the body of knowledge of the graduates and their profiles, that could enhance opportunities for employment).
4. Institutionalize a system of feedback to all stakeholders. Publish all pertinent information on the QAU website, making it the main, but not the only, gateway to this information.
5. Test the process and update whenever weaknesses in meeting strategic goals, and study long term trends to calibrate the process

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

Several examples of good practice were found in the QAU and IQAS of UniPi. Some are listed below:

1. The adaptation of the questionnaires by each department to be completed by the students
2. The use of electronic procedures for entry, collection and analysis of data
3. The explicit reference to the importance for development of the personality and soft skills of the students through targeted actions and KPIs
4. The opportunities and encouragement for participation of graduate students in conferences through the reserve fund of ELKE
5. The good rapport with the stakeholder community
6. The substantial number of cooperation agreements and MOUs of the University with international partners through the Erasmus+ International mobility and other aggressive outreach and internationalization activities pursued by the Administration (e.g. honorary titles awarding to personalities of politics, arts and business)
7. The annual organization of career days that gives opportunities to students to meet prospective employers
8. The introduction of mock interviews to help students prepare for their job search
9. The operation of a Student counselling office with psychology experts for mentoring of students
10. The provision of an afternoon shift of staff in the library to improve student access over a longer part of the day
11. The committed staff that is zealously engaged in the quality culture.

II. Areas of Weakness

1. Limited opportunities for coursework offered in English
2. Limited availability of Human Resources and shortage of space
3. Ad-hoc engagement of the stakeholder community without organizational / institutional structures
4. Relatively low participation in course evaluations; data collection still in paper format
5. Limited overseeing of the Intern learning experience from the Institution, leading to largely varying experiences which sometimes do not meet the learning objectives of the course.
6. According to the stakeholders, short duration of practical training to only the summer months limits the available opportunities for stakeholders and students. Improving the dissemination of the regulations regarding practical training will facilitate a greater number of opportunities.
7. The narrow interpretation of the letter of the HQA guidelines limits out-of-the box initiatives and thinking
8. Limited engagement of peripheral communities (alumni and stakeholders) in implementation of IQAS.
9. Unclear process with respect to feedback of findings in revising strategies, and in development of remedial actions; relationship between strategic goals of QUA and strategic policies implicit.
10. Difficult navigation of websites (need for tabs)
11. Certain procedures have not yet been included explicitly in the IQAS process.
12. Limited content in English Version of Website. Information available in Greek is much more detailed when compared to information available in English.

13. Evidence that ECTS units are not calculated in all departments based on true workload.
14. Testing of reliability of data is still experimental

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

1. More courses should be offered in English to facilitate further incoming Erasmus students and Greek students who plan to continue studies abroad.
2. The Central Administration should proceed with the establishment of an Organization for the Management of the University Property (“Εταιρία Αξιοποίησης της Περιουσίας του Ιδρύματος”)
3. The Central Administration should urgently seek and proceed with all the actions needed in order to start the works necessary in the Olympic facilities at Nikaia including provisions for easy access and transportation.
4. Aim to increasing the number of academic and administrative staff (improve the ratio of students to professors / staff respectively) in order to ease the workload of both for the sake of improving quality in the services and quality of educational experiences.
5. Increase efforts to staff the vacant positions of the administrative personnel in support of QAU, namely one Statistical Analyst and one Support Specialist for the IT system, as soon as possible.
6. Make all necessary arrangements to provide for the representation of students in the QAU as foreseen in the relevant law, since the students are a key component of the Quality Assurance Policy of every academic institution.
7. Communicate more thoroughly the scope and objectives of the QAP to all partners and stakeholders of the community
8. Stress the intangible aspects of the QAP, over and beyond course evaluations to all partnering groups of the university community
9. Seek ways and identify opportunities and organizational structures by which to actively engage Alumni and particularly the Stakeholders in the formulation of quality policies as well as in the development/revision of the course programmes and curricula.
10. To motivate continued interest in quality growth by the community, illustrate how feedback concerning the endorsement of any suggestions and/or solutions to issues reported in student questionnaires and staff satisfaction surveys has been considered. Best practice would be to Institutionalize a system of feedback to all stakeholders. Publish all pertinent information on the QAU website, making it the main, but not the only, gateway to this information.
11. Improve pairing of KPIs with goals, especially with regard to the strategic goal concerning the outreach and internationalisation of the University.
12. Improve and describe in greater detail the procedures for improvement (remedial actions) in QM to avoid interpretation.
13. Processes used by the Institution for monitoring, assessing and reviewing its Strategic and Operational Goals and Procedures should also be incorporated in the IQAS.
14. Data collected through the various procedures should be more clearly analyzed and presented (with the use of graphs and tables to present findings being an imperative). Publication of these results in the website would be useful, unless they pertain to sensitive information, as this is determined by the University’s Administration.
15. Quality assurance procedures referring to problem reporting, the methods, time margins to address/solve these problems and follow up actions, should be clearly indicated.

16. Questionnaires for evaluation of facilities and required equipment could be enhanced to enable information on opportunities for equipment sharing, merging and optimization of resources and rationalization of investment priorities for the procurement of equipment.
17. Implement Electronic Procedures for large volumes of data collection (e.g. course evaluations)
18. Communicate formally to the TA's those evaluation results that concern them.
19. The Administration should explore ways to compensate the Graduate Student Teaching Assistants.
20. Some curriculum structures and study guides for some graduate programs of study are missing (e.g. MSc in Maritime Studies). All webpages of programs of study must be carefully revisited and updated.
21. Provide information in English in all websites/webpages of the organization. In translating the content use precise mapping of the information in both languages.
22. Provide key information, which are common among all Departments, (i.e. Programs of Study, Academic staff CVs, Course Outlines, Program Guides, etc.) in a uniform manner.
23. Test the process and update whenever weaknesses in meeting strategic goals, and study long term trends to calibrate the process

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: **1, 3, 4, 8**

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **2, 5, 6, 7**

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

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

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

**The members of the Accreditation Panel
for the IQAS of the University of Piraeus**

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