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ΑΔΙΠ

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ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΣΤΗΝ ΑΝΩΤΑΤΗ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗ

HELLENIC REPUBLIC

HQA

HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE
AND ACCREDITATION AGENCY

Accreditation Report for the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS)

Institution Name: University of Crete (UoC)

Date: 23 -29 June 2019

ΑΡΙΣΤΕΙΔΟΥ 1 & ΕΥΡΙΠΙΔΟΥ, 105 59 ΑΘΗΝΑ

Τηλ.: +30 210 9220944, FAX: +30 210 9220143

Ηλ. Ταχ.: adipsecretariat@hqa.gr, Ιστότοπος: <http://www.hqa.gr>

1, ARISTIDOU ST., 105 59 ATHENS, GREECE

Tel.: +30 210 9220944, Fax: +30 210 9220143

Email: adipsecretariat@hqa.gr, Website: www.hqa.gr



**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 Crete for the
purposes of granting accreditation

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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 Crete comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HQA Register, in accordance with the Law 4009/2011:

1. Prof. Anthimos Georgiadis, (Chair)
Leuphana University Lüneburg, Lüneburg, Germany
2. Prof. Nicholas Buris,
Shanghai University, Shanghai, China
3. Prof. George Frantziskonis,
University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona, USA
4. Assoc. Prof. Christina Koutra,
Abu Dhabi University, Abu Dhabi, UAE
5. Dr Demetrios Kazantzis,
Del's Lemonade and Refreshments Inc, Cranston, Rhode Island, USA

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

The Panel reviewed the material provided by ADIP in advance of its arrival, during the ADIP briefing and the private Panel meeting. The briefing by ADIP took place on 24/06/2019. Additional information and further documentation were provided regarding the HQA mission, standards and guidelines of HQA accreditation process, and national framework of HEIs including the Quality Measure Metrics (ΟΠΕΣΠ) for 2015-16, 2016-17 and 2017-18. In the afternoon, the Panel met in private in a conference room of the Alexandros hotel and discussed the provided material, allocated tasks and list of issues for the site visit. The Panel arrived at the University of Crete (UoC) late in the evening of 24/06/2019. Next morning, a meeting took place with the Rector and the Vice-Rectors (Odysseas Zoras, Ioannis Karakassis, Panagiotis Tsakalides and Konstantinos Spanoudakis) for an overview of the institution regarding its history, vision, mission, institutional policy overall and especially on quality assurance, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), and academic profile. In a following meeting with the Quality Assurance Unit (QUA/MODIP) – Vice-Rector of Academic Affairs and MODIP members – the Panel discussed matters related to quality culture, structure and operation of the IQAS the self-assessment process and investigated the degree of compliance of the Internal Quality Assurance System to the Standards for Quality Accreditation. The Panel received further information and supporting material related to the work of QUA/MODIP to facilitate their decision for UoC Quality Accreditation. In the next meeting with the Faculty members (Vice-Rector of Academic Affairs, Deans of the Schools, Heads of Departments) and Internal Evaluation Groups (IEGs/OMEA) representatives, the panel facilitated the understanding of the internal evaluation review process, adequacy of resources and possible areas of weaknesses. In addition, discussions took place on the formulation of relationships among the IEGs/OMEA with QUA/MODIP. The Panel received additional information on Schools, administrative, financial, IT and procurement services, Estate & Buildings and infrastructure. The subsequent meeting with the Undergraduate (UGT) and Postgraduate (PGT and PGR) students had as goal to gain an insight of their study experience and campus facilities, and their input in quality control and decision making; discuss their priority issues concerning student life, welfare, grants, mobility, research and career opportunities, and their views on recruitment, learning, progression and assessment. Afterwards, the Panel met in private to reflect on the discussions and prepare for the second day of the visit. A limited but informative impromptu tour of part of the Heraklion campus took place.

On 26/06/2019, the program continued with the following actions:

- Meeting with the postgraduate students to discuss their views on learning process, student input in quality assurance, grants, mobility, research and career opportunities.
- Meeting with Chief administration officers of UoC to discuss the role of Institutional strategic documents (strategic plan, QA manual etc.) in the development of Institution, and special issues arising from the internal evaluation process and from the structure of UoC.
- Meeting with the Alumni to discuss their learning experiences at UoC and their career paths.
- Meeting with the external stakeholders from the public and private sector to understand their relations with the Institution. The meeting lasted longer than planned.

- After a short debriefing with the Panel members only, Meeting with the Quality Assurance Unit (QUA/MODIP) members to review several points and findings. The Panel received further clarifications;

A closure meeting with the rector and vice rectors, Ioannis Karakassis (president of MODIP), Panagiotis Tsakalides of the UoC took place where the Panel briefly presented their key findings.

(Some members for the planned meetings participated via teleconference)

The Panel returned to Athens late in the evening to prepare, in the next two days, the report of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) of UoC following the procedures provided by ADIP.

III. Institution Profile

The University of Crete is a young public educational institution established in 1973, the University accepted its first students in 1977-78. It now has 16 Departments in 5 Schools (Philosophy, Education, Social Sciences, Sciences & Engineering, and Medicine) as well as a number of affiliated research-oriented institutions, including the Skinakas Observatory, the Natural History Museum, and the University General Hospital. Currently, UoC has over 18,000 undergraduates and 3000 postgraduate students. The academic faculty consists of around 450 members, supported by adjunct lecturers, post-doctoral researchers, laboratory staff and instructors, as well as around 300 technical and administrative staff. UoC is located at campuses in Heraklion and Rethymnon on the island of Crete. The University benefits also from the de facto regional cluster of research institutions i.e. the Foundation for Research and Technology-Hellas (FORTH), the Institute of Marine Biology, Biotechnology & Aquaculture (IMBBC), the University General Hospital (PagNi) as well as the other HEIs in Crete.

The University offers 17 undergraduate and 52 post-graduate programmes of studies, Erasmus and Erasmus Mundus, and several active collaborations with foreign institutes. Reflecting its research activity and associated initiatives, the University of Crete has signed the EU Charter and the Code for the recruitment of researchers, and forms part of the Euraxess European network for the mobility of researchers. It is a member of numerous Universities Associations and it is participating in a range of ranking systems.

A representation of external stakeholders both governance and industrial of Rethymnon and Heraklion as well as Region of Crete are actively engaged with sincere interest that extends to social events in activities with several departments of the UoC. The friends of the UoC organization is an active entity and coordinates points of contact between the university and the local community with a plethora of events. Additionally, the university runs four museums on the island, which offer a direct cultural experience and connection with the community and probably establish early emotional roots to future students. It is worth noting that products developed and produced locally with the aid of UoC graduates find their way in not only Europe but also other continents. In addition, the institution has developed workshops aligned with local stakeholders. All present stakeholders expressed strong support for the institution deriving not only from the industrial but also from the governance and civic sector.

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 Crete has two campuses. One is located in Iraklion, the other in the town of Rethymnon. Hence, stakeholders from both campuses were invited to participate in the discussion on the institutions' policy for quality assurance. Remote stakeholders participated through videoconferencing.

The panel met the following stakeholders: the Rector, Vice Rector, the president of MODIP and members MODIP's committee, graduate and postgraduate students, alumni, and public sector stakeholders and concluded the following:

The University of Crete has established an internal Quality Assurance System under the number 396/1-11-18, and after a relevant proposal by MODIP (11/03-10-2018). This move was in alignment with:

- a) The University's strategy (senate decision 391/19-7-2018, Annex A7);
- b) The external evaluation report dated in 2016;
- c) Relevant templates and instructions given by ADIP; and
- d) European entities and Quality Assurance Agencies (ENQA, EUA, EQAF, etc.).

MODIP states that there is dissemination of information regarding the role and importance of a quality assurance system. However, the meeting with various stakeholders such as tutors of various schools and especially students suggests that the role and significance of the system is barely known or not known at all, especially among both undergraduate and postgraduate students.

The Senate's main goal is to establish a 'good' (reputable) university at a local, national and international level. Accordingly, the university has put in place structures needed to create an environment that supports teaching and research! In order to accomplish this goal, it strives to identify the needs at a mainly national level and equip students with all appropriate skills; a task which is thought to be very challenging. This is mainly attributed to the following issues: a) an appreciable number of students gain entry into the university with low scores and b) a large number of students in each class. Both issues in effect compromise quality at the university.

In order to increase the quality of studies the university has established the so called 'Train the Trainer' concept where the tutors are trained in methods that deal with and eliminate this issue. They also try to use power point presentations and recordings of lectures so they are more easily accessible to students for revisions and exams.

Nevertheless, students claim that these measures are not implemented in a uniform manner as this depends on the teaching style, which does not predominantly embrace a student centric approach but mainly a passive and instructional one.

Additionally, the university, in order to enhance and improve best practices, is inviting alumni and industry speakers to give lectures to students in order to match theory to practice. It is also highlighted that research active tutors further enhance quality of teaching. However, arguably, that depends on knowledge transfer skills of the individual tutor.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The university should increase the number of involved private stakeholders, especially from industry.

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

Despite the reduced government funding over the past several years, the university overall has shown agility in adapting to the reduced budget such that quality is at large not compromised.

Funding is mainly received from the government which, however, is regarded insufficient to cover all needs in terms of management, administration, education, research and professional practice. This financial constraint compromises time of delivery and quality of services. External funding is received from the following bodies: a) European Union educational funds such as ERASMUS, and specialized funds such as THALIS; and b) a few industrial funds.

Infrastructure

The University of Crete as aforementioned consists of two campuses. The first one is located in Heraklion, whilst the second in the town of Rethymnon. Hence, some of the lectures, labs, etc. are taking place in Heraklion and some in Rethymnon.

The Panel has only visited the Heraklion and not the Rethymnon campus.

According to the Panel's observations and discussions with the various stakeholders, the following have been established:

The campus as a whole gives a good impression to the observer based on the cleanliness of the place. There is also a move recently to use green technology throughout the campus. The campus infrastructure meets the current needs of UoC.

The formal processes that support improvement of infrastructure is limited by lack of government funding and/or complex bureaucratic processes that require approval at a governmental level. The classrooms and the amphitheatres are not large enough to accommodate the large number of students in some core classes (e.g. early mathematics courses). Anecdotal stories of students sitting on the floor or bringing their own chairs were mentioned.

There is no provision of transportation that transports students between the two campuses. Students expressed concerns about high transportation cost and safety of travel, as many buses tend to speed and exceed carrying capacity.

Working Environment

The working spaces appear well maintained. However, lack of big classrooms are considered a hindrance to the quality of teaching by both academics and students.

There is space allocated for recreational activities

Human Resources

The discussion with all stakeholders concerned identified that there is insufficient administrative and academic staff. However, there is a great spirit of collegiality in the university, which assists processes of delivery. The university, in order to deal with shortage of academic staff, assigns doctorate students to give tutorials and it has established a volunteering institution where retired academics come and teach on a pro bono basis.

The university has established mechanisms such as student advocate and student issue management through the administration.

Panel judgement

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

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

Panel Recommendations

-The university should encourage an across the board framework for increased industry-university collaboration in terms of research and enterprise.

-The university should aim to improve collaboration with not only the public sector but also with the private one as this would increase student placement and ultimately might provide employment to fresh graduates.

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

General Background Information:

The University of Crete was externally evaluated in May 2016. Its overall evaluation was very positive. The recommendations of the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) consisted of improvements in both the strong as well as the weak attributes of the university. While some observations of the EEC were systemic and outside the control of the UoC, completely within the control of the university recommendations were also made. Namely, these recommendations included the following:

- higher degree of formality in establishing, monitoring and assessing appropriate measurable goals with definite timelines and responsible staff
- expand on the outreach programs and international collaborations

The University of Crete has demonstrated a very serious attitude toward quality and its application to the wide spectrum of its activities and organizations. In the interim, it has acted and responded directly to the recommendations of the EEC. Shortly after the EEC report, UoC established several committees focused on key activities pertaining to quality and its monitoring. For example, there are now committees on 'Communication and Outreach', 'New Technologies', 'Cretan Universities Collaborations', 'Student Affairs', 'Environmental Affairs', 'e-learning', etc. In April 2017, MODIP coordinated with the various departments the initiation and creation of quality related goals with specific timelines, measures and responsible staff, per the EEC's recommendations. Despite 'start-up' difficulties in data collection and participation, such a list was created and consisted of both short as well as long term goals. In July 27th, 2018, MODIP issued a 'progress report' documenting progress on the aforementioned list of goals and

pertinent commentary. While the Panel recognizes the difficulties in establishing such a formal quality assurance procedure, MODIP and the UoC must make greater effort. However, during the panel's meeting with the UoC in June of 2019, UoC provided the progress report of 2018.

Even though the Panel would like to see a clearer documentation with the various reports more clearly demonstrating the temporal order of the quality assurance actions, the Panel commends UoC for the establishment of strategic goals and the effort to monitor their progress.

In terms of categories of goals in the dimensions of Study Programmes, Research and Innovation, Administration and Resources, observations of the Panel included the following.

- Various departments looked at the course materials and made appropriate adjustments.
- One Monday a month approximately 150 individual students, staff and local interested citizens participate in discussions on educational, research and professional needs.
- Each department is assigned the task of issuing an annual report with the top 5 issues to be addressed.
- The concept of an "advisor" professor and an ombudsman is in place. The latter is, by nature, rarely used. The former is available to all students and is most heavily used early and later in a student's academic life, albeit not to the same degree by all students. But no student who needs an advisor is deprived of one.
- Although the university strategically focuses its effort to the educational needs of its larger student segment, the middle, it makes a commendable effort to address and keep motivated the top performing students. For example, the Panel was told that certain 'problem sessions', i.e. complimentary to the lectures tutoring sessions, are assigned to some more senior well performing students. Additionally, fellowships exist for a significant percentage of the well performing students.
- Teaching awards have been established and efforts are in place to better stimulate the nomination process.
- The university has not detected a problem and, therefore, has not established a formal anti-plagiarism mechanism when it comes to students' work.
- Student participation percentage to class questionnaires is low. Various departments, therefore, ponder as to the gravity they should assign to issues stated by the students. Absenteeism makes it a challenge to collect more statistically robust data on student responses.
- International activities include the admirable signing of a Memorandum of Understanding between the UoC and the Shanxi Medical University in China and ongoing effort for the establishment of a substantial bilateral collaboration and exchange program.
- Notably skilled and enthusiastic members, who believe in the importance of quality, staff MODIP.
- The Heraklion campus was the only UoC site that the Panel was able to visit. An impromptu tour of the campus and its facilities was undertaken the evening of the first day of the Panel's visit. The facilities were clean and the buildings were in an acceptable condition. Nevertheless, as an example, the air conditioning unit in the building housing the biology department was not functional. This failure occurred about six months before the visit.

- A fire broke out at the Heraklion students' dormitories in 2018. The UoC and the local community has provided substantial support. Budget has been approved for new facilities. In the interim, arrangements are being made for the new academic year.
- The maintenance staff voiced a strong concern that their budget and staffing was inadequate to service the 100.000 m² campus facilities in Heraklion and the 30.000 m² facilities in Rethymnon. Alternatively, innovative ways are being examined by the UoC to address the budget difficulties of the facilities maintenance through programs on new "Green" facilities that would allow an upgrade under environmental initiatives.
- MODIP collects data from various data bases available at the UoC, e.g. Library, the Office of the Rector, student, courses as well as professor databases and ELKE (i.e. the Accounting Site of Research Funding). However, more financial data is required for better data analysis and identification of potential quality assurance issues. MODIP plans to improve the collection of more relevant financial information.

The director of Research Administration and Finance stated that the use of research funding is spent expeditiously and efficiently, despite often monumental difficulties due to the complexity and bureaucracy of the procurement system.

Panel judgement

Principle 3: Establishing Goals for Quality Assurance	
3.1 Study Programmes/ education activities	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	x
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
3.2 Research & Innovation	
Fully compliant	x
Substantially compliant	
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

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

MODIP was efficient in creating a functional and useful website with pertinent information. The information available is open and available to all external visitors. The information included clear structure of the university quality functional organizations and the organizational structure of MODIP. The documentation provided and suggested by ADIP is easily available on the website.

The practice of quality by a number of UoC staff, in a rather oversimplified way, appears to have two major components. One, the initiative and the strong personal relations between the individual staff and his or her network of connections. Second, the formal quality processes at the department, college and university level. The former is very strong and manifested by the vast majority of the staff interviewed by the AP. The latter enjoyed a little less support. Some staff hesitantly voiced the concern that it imposed a degree of overhead to their work under the stress of their limited resources. Some felt that certain quality issues identified by the MODIP process were not followed-up adequately, or substantially, hence diluting the value of quality assessment. This is certainly a challenge. However, UoC is on the right track in establishing a healthy balance between maintaining formalities and allowing space for individual creativity.

The general impression of the Panel is that MODIP through its observations and the UoC through its actions addresses effectively quality assurance issues to the degree allowed by the Greek legal system.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- MODIP should consider a simplified flow chart of some of its key quality assurance processes.
- UoC should exercise more rigor in following up with the timeline of goals, goal updates, and progress reports.

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

MODIP oversees and administers the internal review processes of all units and entities. It monitors the processes, collects the outcomes of the processes, and attempts to use the data effectively as feedback to the relevant units/persons. It also shares the outcomes with the university administration. MODIP also promotes actions so that the reviews result in documented action plans. Details are provided below:

Course Evaluations

Course evaluations are primarily performed electronically, except for a few courses that include laboratory material where the questionnaire is distributed to students in paper form and collected as such. The questionnaire is primarily that of ADIP for all courses across the university.

However, for some courses that contain laboratory material the questionnaire is slightly modified from that of ADIP. The participation rate is extremely low. However, the participation rate for courses near graduation and for graduate courses is higher. According to MODIP, however, participation rates vary. They can be high for some courses (e.g., for some laboratory courses in the school of medicine) and very low for others. MODIP compiles the questionnaire results and communicates them to the university administration. The results are communicated to teaching faculty as feedback.

Little input on curriculum and curriculum changes is provided from student bodies, from alumni, industry, and from stakeholders.

There is an active alumni council. There is interaction with industry and other stakeholders, especially with local authorities. Interaction with the local authorities (mayor's office, regional governor's office) is significant.

It is the panel's assessment that certain effective processes are in place to ensure a proper self-assessment. Relevant self-assessment indicators are in place, primarily through the course evaluation mechanisms. MODIP acknowledges the progress it has made over the past several years, yet it recognizes that there is room for further improvement.

The feedback sought through the students' questionnaire established after ADIP's proposal is thought to act as a correctional tool. However, according to tutors' and students' comments the questionnaire is not filled by a significant number of student and hence may not be as representative. Additionally, students highlighted that their comments either are not taken into consideration on a grant scale or not at all. This is suggested by students, who repeat a course after they made comments for improvements the first time of enrolment. It is worthwhile mentioning that students discussed mostly about more practical issues such as accommodation, transportation, etc. rather than quality of education. Students do get the questionnaires and, therefore, they do have some knowledge of aspects of the quality process. MODIP said they will establish a committee to deal with the issues arising as a result of the feedback received through the questionnaires.

Although the university's strategy is to focus on the majority of the student population, incentives such as fellowships for excelling students exist as well as opportunities for senior well performing students to provide tutoring sessions to lower classes.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- MODIP should include in the self-assessment process indicators relevant to input from students, alumni, industry and local authorities in the evaluation and modification of the curriculum process.
- Self-assessment could be used in various creative ways as a tool to alleviate certain problems, e.g., delayed graduation by many students.

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

The MODIP data collection process is appropriate.

Students (optional) complete an electronic version of a detailed questionnaire per course. The questionnaire is primarily that provided from ADIP, with few modifications for some of the courses that have a laboratory component. The questionnaire covers aspects of the course material, learning resources, learning outcomes and the effectiveness and competence of the instructor. Even though departments were given creative freedom to adopt their questionnaires according to their specific needs (e.g., laboratory/clinical sections, etc.), this freedom has not, apparently, been used to modify the questionnaire (and perhaps reduce the number of questions) by the units.

Program assessments are supervised and evaluated by committees at the departmental level. Student participation through quantitative course evaluation, undergraduate program committees and suggestions for improvement of courses are routinely taking place every semester.

Information was given in terms of research-related indices.

Staff and administrative services are evaluated through the upper administration (in addition to yearly evaluation).

The panel applauds that MODIP has identified that the current process for data collection and processing needs improvement to make it more effective and communicative to various constituents as feedback.

Quality data relevant to the availability and accessibility of resources (equipment, social services, IT facilities, etc.) is collected.

Panel judgement

Principle 6: Collection of Data: Measuring, Analysis & Improvement	
6.1 Study Programmes / education activities	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	x
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	
Substantially compliant	x
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

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

Panel Recommendations

- Additional data should be collected from all stakeholders concerned.
- A more comprehensive and active alumni should be created.

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 University of Crete has almost all pertinent information related to teaching, research and academic programs. All program descriptions for both undergraduate and graduate studies are readily available in both printed and electronic forms. Curricula of studies, course outlines and study guides are comprehensively presented in each department's website. Curriculum vitae of all faculty members and areas of interest are also available online. There is a paperless process from the application that proceeds with course outlines, fees, degrees awarded, and all pertinent information that a student needs in his academic career. The website of the University includes the structure of the University along with the operation of the IQAS. Both, the University's quality assurance policy and mission statement are available online and presented clearly in a simple and comprehensive way. All internal and external evaluation reports of UoC are current, clearly stated, easily accessible and updated on a regular basis promptly, on the institutions website.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

1. The UoC/MODIP should develop a fully functional website in English.

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 UoC has enthusiastically and meaningfully adopted the quality assurance concept.

The UoC undergone an external evaluation on May 9, 2016. The present quality assurance accreditation is the very first one for the institution. All the staff members, including faculty are well aware of the role, importance and purpose of the IQAS external review and has tried to apply all recommendations by the evaluation committee. The UoC drafted and submitted a progress report in response to the May 2016 external evaluation of the institution by the HQA. All recommendations by the EEC have been addressed.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

- a. Goal setting is clear and adapted to the specific characteristics of UoC. Every operational goal is clearly paired with relevant KPIs.
- b. The University stakeholders are actively supporting the university's policy.

In addition, the Panels points out the following and credits the Administration and the QAU of UoC:

1. The university is clean and secure.
2. Strong interaction with the local society.

II. Areas of Weakness

1. There is no procedure of engaging internal and external stakeholders during the process of course development and review.
2. Although the public has a very positive impression of the UoC more awareness is required regarding individual achievements.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- Develop a collection information process for continuous course improvement regarding the engagement of internal and external stakeholders.
- Develop a marketing plan to highlight the strengths of the institution.
- Establish a plan for prompt attention to infrastructure needs.
- Establish a work placement mechanism.
- Establish procedures for a more effective implementation of the internal evaluation results.
- Improve consistency of goal tracking and assessment procedures.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are:

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are:

6

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are:

N/A

The Principles where failure of compliance was identified are:

N/A

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

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

Name and Surname

Signature

Prof. Anthimos Georgiadis (Chair), Leuphana University
Lüneburg, Lüneburg, Germany

Prof. Nicholas Buris, Shanghai University, Shanghai, China

Prof. George Frantziskonis, University of Arizona, Tucson,
Arizona, USA

Assoc. Prof. Christina Koutra, Abu Dhabi University, Abu
Dhabi, UAE

Dr Demetrios Kazantzis, Del's Lemonade and Refreshments
Inc, Cranston, Rhode Island, USA