ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
**Α .Δ Ι .Π .**
ΑΡΧΗ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ
ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ
ΣΤΗΝ ΑΝΩΤΑΤΗ
ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗ

HELLENIC REPUBLIC
**H .Q .A .**
HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE AND
ACCREDITATION AGENCY

# EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

DEMOCRITUS UNIVERSITY OF THRACE

January 2016

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

**EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT ........................................................................................... 1**

**DEMOCRITUS UNIVERSITY OF THRACE ................................................................................ 1**

**1 EXTERNAL EVALUATION COMMITTEE .......................................................................... 4**

**2 INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................................................ 5**

2.1 The External Evaluation Procedure .................................................................................... 5
2.2 The Self-Evaluation Procedure .......................................................................................... 7

**3 PROFILE OF THE INSTITUTION UNDER EVALUATION ............................................. 10**

3.1 Institutional Governance, Leadership & Strategy .............................................................. 10
 3.1.1 Vision, mission and goals of the Institution ................................................................ 10
 3.1.2 Organizational Development Strategy ......................................................................... 12
 3.1.3 Academic Development Strategy ................................................................................ 15
 3.1.4 Research Strategy ....................................................................................................... 16
 3.1.5 Financial Strategy ....................................................................................................... 18
 3.1.6 Building and Grounds Infrastructure Strategy ............................................................ 20
 3.1.7 Environmental Strategy .............................................................................................. 21
 3.1.8 Social Strategy ............................................................................................................ 22
 3.1.9 Internationalization Strategy ....................................................................................... 24
 3.1.10 Student Welfare Strategy .......................................................................................... 26
3.2 Strategy for Study Programmes ........................................................................................ 28
 3.2.1 Programmes of Undergraduate Studies (first cycle) .................................................... 28
 3.2.2 Programmes of Doctoral Studies (third cycle) ............................................................ 30
3.3 Profile of the Institution under evaluation - Conclusions and recommendations ............ 33

**4 INTERNAL SYSTEM OF QUALITY ASSURANCE ........................................................... 36**

4.1 Quality Assurance (QA) Policy and Strategy ..................................................................... 36
4.2 Design, approval, monitoring and evaluation of the study programmes and degrees awarded ...... 39
4.3 Teaching and learning - Assessment by students ............................................................... 41
4.4 Admission of students, progression and recognition of studies ......................................... 43
4.5 Quality Assurance as regards the teaching staff ................................................................ 44
4.6 Learning resources and student support ............................................................................. 47
4.7 Information Systems for Recording and Analysing Data and Indicators ............................ 49
4.8 Dissemination of information to stakeholders ................................................................... 51
4.9 Continuous monitoring and periodic review of the study programmes ............................. 52
4.10 Periodic external evaluation .............................................................................................. 53
4.11 Internal System of Quality Assurance – Conclusions and recommendations ................... 54

**5 OPERATION OF THE CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE INSTITUTION .................... 56**

5.1 Central Administration Services of the Institution ........................................................................56
5.2 Operation of the Central Administration of the Institution – Conclusions and recommendations .57

***6. FINAL CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS*****……………………………………………………59**

*6.1 Final decision of the EEC……………………………………………………………………………….61*

**The Members of the External Evaluation Committee ................................................................................62**

# 1 EXTERNAL EVALUATION COMMITTEE

The Committee responsible for the External Evaluation of the Democritus University comprised the following five (5) expert evaluators drawn from the Registry kept by the HQA in accordance with Law 3374/2005 and the Law 4009/2011:

1. Prof. John Spiridakis, (Chairman),
   St. John's University, New York, U.S.A.
2. Prof. Athina Petropulu,
   Rutgers University, New Jersey, U.S.A.
3. Prof. Panagiota Klentrou,
   Brock University, Ontario, Canada
4. Prof. Yannis Dimitriadis,
   Universidad de Valladolid, Valladolid, Spain
5. Prof. Dionysis Bochtis,
   University of Aarhus, Aarhus, Denmark

# 2 INTRODUCTION

## *2.1 The External Evaluation Procedure*

- Dates and brief account of the site visit
- Whom did the Committee meet?
- List of Reports, documents, other data examined by the EEC
- Groups of teaching and administrative staff and students interviewed
- Facilities visited by the EEC

The Committee for External Evaluation (hereafter the Committee or EEC) visited the University of Thrace (hereafter the DUTH) during the period November 30th – December 4th. The team arrived at the city of Komotini (Κομοτηνή) in the evening of Nov 29th. On Monday, November 30th, and after a brief orientation meeting from Prof. Panagiotis Tsaklis, member of the HQA Council, the EEC had a series of meetings which included:

- Meeting with the Rector and the Vice-Rectors,
- Meeting with the Vice-President of the Administration's Council,
- Meeting with the Vice-Rector/President and members of self-evaluation steering group (hereafter the QAU), and
- Meeting with external partners from industry, society, and local authority representatives

On Tuesday, December 1st, EEC was split into two groups to visit DUTH faculties in the city of Alexandroupolis (Αλεξανδρούπολη) and in the city of Orestiada (Ορεστιάδα). Specifically:

Two members of EEC visited:

- Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and Forestry
  - Department of Agricultural Development
  - Department of Forestry and Management of the Environment and Natural Resources

Three members of EEC visited:

- Faculty of Health Sciences
  - Department of Medicine
  - Department of Molecular Biology and Genetics
- Faculty of Education Sciences
  - Department of Primary Level Education
  - Department of Education Sciences in Early Childhood

On Wednesday, December 2nd, EEC was split again into two groups to visit DUTH faculties in the city of Xanthi (Ξάνθη) and in the city of Komotini (Κομοτηνή). Specifically:

Three members of EEC visited:

- Faculty of Engineering

  - Department of Civil Engineering
  - Department of Electrical and Computing Engineering
  - Department of Architectural Engineering

Two members of EEC visited:

- Faculty of Law
  - Department of Law
- Faculty of Physical Education and Sport Science
  - Department of Physical Education and Sport Science
- Faculty of Classics and Humanities Studies
  - Department of Language, Literature and Civilization of the Back Sea Countries
  - Department of Greek Literature[1]
  - Department of History and Ethnology
  - Department of Hellenic Studies
- Faculty of Social, Political, and Economic Sciences
  - Department of Social Administration and Political Science
  - Department of Economics

In all of the above listed visits, the corresponding Committee members had meetings with:

- Deans of the Faculties and Chairs of the Departments
- Internal Evaluation Groups representatives
- Academic staff representatives
- Undergraduate students representatives
- Master students, PhD students, Postdocs, and alumni

On Thursday, December 3rd, a final meeting took place where the Rector, Vice-Rectors and MODIP responded to EEC questions and clarified issues that emerged during the site visits and meetings. The EEC also presented a brief account of impressions and considerations regarding its visit.

Throughout the evaluation process, a number of documents had been delivered to the Committee, including:

- The self-evaluation report of DUTH
- The presentations given to Committee during the first day of the evaluation process
- The external evaluation reports for all DUTH departments
- The internal MODIP report for the quality assurance system of DUTH
- A number of documents on details of, e.g., details on funding, faculty publications activities, etc.

The committee would like to highlight that all requested supplementary documented information have been promptly provided.

Furthermore, the Committee unanimously is expressing its sincere gratitude to the faculty, staff, and students for their professionalism, assistance, and hospitality in all aspects during the external evaluation procedure.

---

[1] As it appears in the department's web site

| *Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&2.1):* | Tick |
|---|---|
| **Worthy of merit** | ✓ |
| **Positive evaluation** | |
| **Partially positive evaluation** | |
| **Negative evaluation** | |

### *2.2 The Self-Evaluation Procedure*

- Appropriateness of sources and documentation used
- Quality and completeness of evidence provided and reviewed
- The extent to which the objectives of the internal evaluation procedure have been met by the Institution
- Description and Analysis of the Self-Evaluation Procedure in the Institution
- Analysis of the positive elements and difficulties which arose during the self-evaluation procedure
- Whether the self-evaluation procedure was comprehensive and interactive

The documentation provided to the EEC was adequate and appropriate. In addition, the self-evaluation team MODIP was very responsive in providing supplementary information deemed necessary by the EEC. For the most part, the information provided was clear and reliable.

According to the Self-evaluation Report (IER), the self-evaluation process has strengthened the “quality culture” across the University as evidenced by the participation of core faculty and staff members throughout the process. It is reported that the process facilitated the development of better data acquisition systems, as well as the accurate and timely recording of the functioning and operation of the institution. It highlighted weaknesses in the quality assurance system of the institution leading to the development of initiatives to address them. It also recorded the weaknesses of the institution leading to the development of strategies in various areas. The Report also identified some weaknesses in the self-evaluation procedure, all of which are external to the University. It would be useful for MODIP to closely identify and record internal weaknesses or what could be done internally to bypass the external obstacles.

The internal team of Quality Assurance team (MODIP) of DUTH includes six academic members and six member representatives of the other constituencies of the Institution, i.e., staff and students. However, the six representatives have not been appointed mainly because of delays in their election by their respective associations. MODIP worked extensively and intensively with the members of the project management team, the department chairs and members of the departmental evaluation teams, the deans, the secretariats of schools and departments, the students, as well as the heads and employees of the administrative units and the library. The Self-evaluation Report was based to a large extent on the annual departmental reports, which have been revised to fit the newer format required by ADIP. Based on the changes, MODIP revised the data collection forms and tables that were sent to the chairs of all departments with instructions of what type of data was required and how to complete the tables. There were some delays in the data collection mainly due to electronic issues and lack of administrative staff. Upon collection of the departmental forms/tables, the project management team ran the data analysis and the results were presented in the Self-evaluation Report. The Report was discussed with the Rector and Vice-rectors, and after its final approval by MODIP it was made available publicly on the MODIP website to all members of Senate. There was no report available on the members' reaction or the extent of consultation with Senate.

The University wide evaluation is a new challenge and the implementation of such an evaluation is a laborious task that involves applying a cohesive set of metrics across departments and disciplines as well as a university-wide acceptance of quality assurance goals. The success of the evaluation procedure is based on the collective buy-in and understanding of priorities and key performance indicators applied. It was clear through the interaction with the departments that the evaluation process is well received. The first round of internal and external departmental evaluations resulted in significant curricula revisions based on both the self-evaluation findings and the recommendations by external reviewers. For example, the department of Hellenic Studies revised their curriculum to be more flexible and give students the opportunity to take electives from other programs. Students report that this was a positive change. Other departments also provided evidence of added value to the students' experience as a result of the self-evaluation procedure.

There appears to be some opposition to the self-evaluation process across different sectors of the academic community.

MODIP's membership includes three staff members representing the different constituencies of the Institution. According to legislation, these members do not participate in the regular meetings of MODIP, but they are invited if it is considered necessary, when relevant issues are to be discussed.

In the case of student representatives (undergraduate and graduate), a problem exists in the resistance from student associations to proceed with the elections; but it was unclear as to what other problem deterred the appointment of other (i.e., staff) representatives. In addition, many students at the Polytechnic School reported during interviews that they were not aware of the results – changes that were planned and implemented after the external evaluation at the departmental level. On the contrary, others were aware of reactions and enhancements after completing the questionnaires regarding their own course specific evaluations. Interestingly, one student mentioned the need to find a common path among professors and students. A small group of students from the Law School confronted the EEC visitors having been misinformed about the results of the departmental external evaluations conducted elsewhere, which, according to them, had resulted in the discontinuation and amalgamation of programs.

A consultation plan to inform and communicate with the University community and make all feel included in the process could be the remedy for antagonistic views or apathy. Such a plan could include Town Hall meetings, presentations to department and/or Faculty meetings, regular progress updates on the web page, regular progress updates to Senate, meetings with representatives of various groups of students and staff, etc.

In closing, the self-evaluation procedure was comprehensive in its scope, highly inclusive and interactive, involving the input of many dedicated and responsible administrators and faculty. Next steps should involve the development and implementation of new approaches to address the issue of stakeholder buy-in and to increase participation in the process.

| *Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&2.2):* | Tick |
|---|---|
| **Worthy of merit** | ✓ |
| **Positive evaluation** | |
| **Partially positive evaluation** | |
| **Negative evaluation** | |

# 3 PROFILE OF THE INSTITUTION UNDER EVALUATION

## *3.1 Institutional Governance, Leadership & Strategy*

### 3.1.1 Vision, mission and goals of the Institution

- What are the Institution’s mission and goals
- Priorities set by goals
- How are the goals achieved
- Procedures established by the Institution to monitor the achievement of goals
- What is your assessment of the Institution’s ability to improve

The DUTH delineates clearly its vision, mission and goals in its internal evaluation provided to the EEC. The university envisions the institution as the dynamic center of society and producer of socially relevant and highly effective education programs. Its mission reflects this vision. The mission in accordance with the applicable regulations, can be summarized as follows:

- To promote and transmit knowledge through research and teaching, to provide practical professional experiences to students, and to cultivate and promote the arts and culture.
- To offer exemplary academic programs and contribute to life-long learning utilizing modern instructional methodology, including Distance Learning, scientific and research-based teaching, and research practices reflecting high standards of internationally accepted criteria.
- To prepare students to become critical thinkers, develop professional competence to enter careers, and to become researchers in various disciplines.
- To respond to the needs of society and the trends of the job market, including professional and vocational careers, and to enhance the dissemination of knowledge and improve research outcomes and innovation consistent with scientific ethics, and lead to viable development and social cohesion.
- To promote cooperation with other universities and institutions of higher learning and research, within Greece and abroad, to effectuate the mobility of education personnel, students and graduates, and to enable them to contribute to research that can be applied in a European and global dimension.
- To contribute to the formation of responsible citizens who are capable of responding to the demands of all scientific, vocational and cultural fields of human endeavor with deference to the values of social justice, freedom, democracy and societal cohesion.

The individual goals of DUTH can be summarized as follows:

- The improvement of all educational services
- The attainment of excellence in research and science
- The improvement of student and faculty support services

- The further internationalization and global aspects of the university's programs
- The furtherance of economic support and alternative sources of funding
- The reinforcement of the university's role in responding to the needs of society
- The restructuring of administrative agencies and services
- The advancement of information technology and communication systems.
- The enhancement and reinforcement of the university's infrastructure

The goals subsumed by the mission stated above adhere to the following areas for all Schools and Departments within the university as well as the various University Agencies and Support Services according to the internal evaluation of MODIP. These areas have been prioritized as per the interviews with the various Internal Evaluation Committees such as MODIP:

- The continuous improvement of theoretical preparation in coursework.
- Preparing faculty and students to well-versed in latest technology
- To ensure that up-to-date technological advances are incorporated among the university's various Schools, Departments, Agencies and Communication Systems
- To promote achievement and high caliber research
- To build upon and expand as appropriate Graduate Studies in various Schools and Departments
- To strengthen and expand the university's global relevance through pervasive internationalization of curricula, research and field experiences
- To continue capitalize on the university's unique geographical position in order to help respond to the realities and needs of the local and regional areas and to contribute to the economy, growth and development of these areas.

The Internal School and Departmental Evaluation Committees that meet to discuss implementation issues monitor the afore-mentioned mission and goals.

This is the first time DUTH has undergone an external evaluation of the entire university. In preparation for the EEC's visit and evaluation, the MODIP prepared an "omnibus" comprehensive Internal Evaluation that is discussed further in the next section. The findings of the EEC elaborated herein are based on the DUTH Internal Report as well as the EEC's interviews with the Rector, MODIP, meetings with the other Internal Evaluation Committee members and meetings with the faculty members of the various Schools and Departments. These findings demonstrate that there is potential for DUTH to improve upon its current wide-range of services.

The members of the MODIP include highly competent and experienced administrators, faculty and assistants. The administrators include vice-provosts and deans who have worked as effective faculty members in administrative capacities running multiple programs for many years. The assistants include postdoctoral students with expertise in data collection and information technology, that latter being the lynchpin of the university's future promise of perfecting its achievement of Quality Assurance and Goals.

The University administrators, including but not limited to the Rector, provosts and Deans participated enthusiastically at the meetings with the EEC and illustrated their passion and creativity in being able to effectuate change within the constraints of the country's expansive regulatory system, economic challenges, and idiosyncratic political cultural norms.

In closing, DUTH has a history of responding as effectively as possible to past evaluations as it now has in its current university-wide evaluation: In depth analysis is undertaken in a forthright and honest manner that identifies strengths and weaknesses within the procedural framework. Given the time frame between the development of the IER and the site visit of the EEC, understandably clear evidence as to whether and how these goals have been achieved is lacking. On the other hand, the organizational strategy put in place to implement the mission and goals was clearly articulated by the DUTH administration and MODIP in its comprehensive IER are. It is, therefore, concluded that the achievement of these goals are a work in progress, also taking into account that this is the first time the mission and goals have been articulated for external scrutiny. The assessment of whether the degree of achievement of these goals will be the main objectives of a subsequent iteration of the internal and external evaluation process at the level of the University.

| *Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&3.1.1):* | Tick |
|---|---|
| **Worthy of merit** | ✓ |
| **Positive evaluation** | |
| **Partially positive evaluation** | |
| **Negative evaluation** | |

### 3.1.2 Organizational Development Strategy

- Effectiveness of administrative officials
- Existence of effective operation regulations
- Specific goals and timetables
- Measures taken to reach goals

The university has taken steps to structure an effective organizational approach to ensure maximum responsiveness to needs identified in the mission and goals.

The Rector’s administrative team and MODIP have structured a model of Quality Assurance through continual self-evaluation. The university-wide Internal or self-evaluation approach is based on guidelines determined by ADIP first of all. MODIP was given the updated ADIP Guidelines and took up the task of determining its own Quality Assurance Organizational Development Strategy for the entire university. The MODIP considered and obtained feedback on identifying the best characteristics of quality at the university level. They drew upon the work of Philip B. Crosby and Peter Drucker, and ideas from other publications on Quality Assurance Organizational Development Strategies such as those used in Irish Universities, the British Quality Assurance Agency and the up-to-date Standards and Guidelines for Quality Assurance in the European Higher Education Area (2105).

MODIP in its report sums up its definition of Academic quality as “a way of describing how well the learning opportunities available to students help them achieve their award. It is about making sure that appropriate and effective teaching, support, assessment, and learning opportunities are provide for them.”

In an accelerated timetable based on directives from ADIP, the research by MODIP on QA was translated by MODIP, in consultation with the Deans and Chairs and Advisory Board, into a set of operational guidelines that were set in motion. These MODIP guidelines provide strategies to the Schools and Departments to gather input and data through the various stakeholders including the Administrators, Deans, Chairs, faculty, students, and active community members. Goals and timetables are established for meetings of the various committees.

MODIP, in turn, processes the flow of information obtained by the functioning of the main Internal Evaluation Committees and Advisory Board.

The Rector’s administrative team and MODIP have established goals and timetables. These were set to achieve the fullest participation of deans, chairs, faculty and personnel from all of the Schools and Departments and all of the agencies, on the four campuses. According to the MODIP and other IEC members during the interviews, and consistent with the IER, regular meetings of various committees were held and continue to be held and across departments and campuses.

The goals and timetables, for example, are structured and will be implemented through the new system for collecting data from all departments on the research and publication productivity of faculty and student satisfaction with their coursework. Other comprehensive, university-wide Quality Assurance strategies to assess to what extent goals have been reached include gathering and analysing data related to the operation of the academic units, ECTS system, and graduation rates. It was reported that the new system of data entry would be ready in January 2016.

The organizational development strategy is illustrated succinctly in its chart. Five steps or stages are elaborated upon to identify the area of concern, find a solution, implement it and then re-evaluate.

It should be emphasized that the process, simple in its depiction, involves a comprehensive approach that includes responding to the Internal Evaluations Committee findings and recommendations for the Departments and responding in kind to the External Evaluation Committees that have issued findings and recommendations during the past several years for the departments have been initiated and implemented by the University Administration. It is one that has been continually modified over the past several years of the University’s experience with developing internal evaluations and responding to external evaluations of most of it Schools and Departments.

Measures are taken to reach the goals set by the university. As mentioned, the continual monitoring by the Internal School and Departmental Evaluation Committees is accomplished through regular meetings to discuss implementation issues. The system includes reporting back findings and recommendations through this dynamic, collaborative network and hierarchy of evaluation committees.

The Rector has instituted a framework within which the major Internal Evaluation and Advisory Committees operate, report and communicate with one another as well as their faculty members. It is worth noting that the Rector has been at the university since its inception in 1974, beginning as a student and then going on to become a faculty member and administrator at various levels. He and other experienced administrators bring a unique institutional memory and experience to DUTH's leadership; the Institutional and the regional challenges will also require flexibility for new ideas and diversification of organizational and regional strategies. It is also worth noting, and an indication of the dedication of the top administrators of the university, that the Rector and Provost (and President of MODIP) continue to teach courses and mentor doctoral students to help deal with the shortage of faculty caused by the inability to hire faculty to replace the faculty members who have retired.

With few exceptions, the Schools and departments within Schools participate and feedback is obtained. From the feedback, obstacles to the major goals and problem areas are identified and corrective measures are discussed although, in some cases understandably, not yet implemented.

The DUTH Internal Evaluation as analysed by the EEC in conjunction with the findings borne out of its extensive interviews and site visits over five days indicate a committed and, most importantly, a collaborative and concerted effort by the Administration, Deans and Chairs to address the many issues confronting and confounding on-going efforts to sustain the university's successes and to seek effective, newly devised approaches to achieving the priorities elucidated in the Internal Evaluation Report.

In closing, DUTH has, like other public universities in Greece, completed the transition to the ECTS system, internal evaluations of its departments, and responded to external evaluations of its departments. DUTH has responded to its current university wide self-evaluation task by designing a meritorious system for achieving its mission and assuring quality in all schools, departments, and agencies and in its infrastructure.

| *Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&3.1.2):* | Tick |
|---|---|
| **Worthy of merit** | ✓ |
| **Positive evaluation** | |
| **Partially positive evaluation** | |
| **Negative evaluation** | |

### 3.1.3 Academic Development Strategy

- Response of the Institution to Faculties and Departments
- Goals and timetables
- Measures taken to reach goals

DUTH encompasses 8 schools and 20 departments, across 4 geographically dispersed campuses at Xanthi, Komotini, Alexandroupolis and Orestiada. This model was established for the university to cover typical education needs and also provide a cultural center to Thrace, which is serving the northeastern part of Greece bordering with Turkey and Bulgaria. This geographically distributed model faces several challenges, which are exacerbated by limited financial resources, Greek bureaucracy and resistance to embracing new technology, e.g., electronic signatures, teleconferencing, online courses, etc. The same model, however, provides opportunities, mostly due to the strategically important location of DUTH at the border of three countries. Unlike most other universities in Greece, some Schools consist of one department (Law school and School of Physical Education and Sport Science).

It was made clear that the Greek Ministry of Education did not support certain academic plans of the DUTH administration. In addition, certain programs that would compete with programs at other Greek universities were not approved. While there was a plan to start a Greek language program in English for European Citizens only, the Greek Ministry of Education decided to postpone the plan. Indeed, offering tuition generating degrees in English for Schools and departments is of ultimate importance for capitalizing on the geographical advantages of DUTH.

Although the academic model of DUTH presents challenges, all of these challenges could be overcome and turned into advantages by careful strategic planning. Many universities around the world have campuses distributed over different cities, or even between different countries; DUTH could learn from those schools. However, the main problem with DUTH, as with all Greek Universities, is its powerlessness to set a stable, long-term strategic plan for itself. It is unfortunate that the planning is done by the Greek Ministry of Education, and regulations and politics have not automatically jibed with or supported the stated vision and goals of the DUTH administration to build a stronger university with international visibility.

DUTH has plans to start 2 new schools in Drama and Kavala, including departments focusing on physics, chemistry, mathematics, and computer science. The idea behind this plan is the development of the region. However, it is not clear that adding new schools, new buildings, new labs, new faculty, new staff, is a good approach, if the planning takes into account only the development of the area and not the employment opportunities for the various fields, as determined by international organizations. It is also not clear how this plan is consistent with the “smart specialization” plan promoted by the European Community.

There are also plans for establishment of programs for lifelong learning and masters program in English. Both are good initiatives, as long as there is a financial model with specific goals. For example, a common model abroad is that the masters program pays for itself and also supports the PhD program, i.e., funds PhD candidates.

| *Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&3.1.3):* | Tick |
|---|---|
| **Worthy of merit** | |
| **Positive evaluation** | ✓ |
| **Partially positive evaluation** | |
| **Negative evaluation** | |

### 3.1.4 Research Strategy

- Key points in research strategy
- Research strategy objectives and timetables for achieving them
- Laboratory research support network
- Research excellence network
- Existence of research assistance mechanisms (for preparing proposals, capitalising on patents and innovations, finding partners for research programmes, etc.)

Before even addressing the above points, it should be emphasized that it is hard to evaluate the university for a strategy that mostly depends on the Greek government and as such does not have an at-least a 5-year horizon.

The research strategy of DUTH targets promoting research excellence, national and international, including international collaborations, ensuring sustainable operation of research infrastructure, and transferring the developed technology to the local economy.

The research operation is supported by SARF (special account for research funds). The plan is to have SARF accredited according to the international standard ISO 9001:2008[2]. In the next 6 years, DUTH's research operation will gear towards smart specialization, a vision supported by the European community. Smart specialization targets at identifying the unique features/strengths of each geographic region, and getting businesses, universities and local government work together towards making the best use of those features for the common good.

---

[2] After the EEC's departure from DUTH, the certification processes of the SARF's Quality Management System were completed (December 28, 2015) in accordance with ISO 9001:2008 . The official certificates are posted on the SARF's website (http://www.rescom.duth.gr/elke-dpth-pistopoiitiko-iso-90012008?812950389=1).

DUTH has some clearly unique characteristics, stemming from its geographic location at the borders with Turkey and Bulgaria, and abundance in natural resources (forests, water). During the site visit, DUTH's campus in Orestiada seemed to be establishing itself as a first rate research and education operation in the areas of Agriculture and Forestry/Environment. In keeping with its mission, DUTH should build on Orestiada's strengths and explore synergies with the engineering departments in Xanthi in order to identify directions of research that capitalize on the unique regional and other characteristics of DUTH. A graduate program in English could be built around those areas, which could attract students from other countries as well as Greece. Additionally, as planned in its IER, more collaboration opportunities should be promoted between research groups of excellence, which may be situated in different campuses or cities, as e.g. the School of Medicine and the Department of Electrical Engineering, taking advantage of top installations, such as the magnetic resonance equipment available in Alexandroupolis.

DUTH has established a Technology Transfer Office, and has produced Newsletter providing information on its activities. The Intellectual Property (IP) policy has been submitted to Senate for approval[3], which means that the Technology Transfer Office could soon operate in a way that the research of the faculty and students is protected. The EEC met with representatives of local businesses. While all representatives acknowledged and appreciated in no uncertain terms the ideas and expertise they receive from DUTH faculty, there seemed a surprising consensus that there was no need for them to give back to the faculty or to the University. Such a "one-way" technology transfer is basically an exploitation of DUTH's intellectual capital. Regarding the Newsletter, a more user appealing form would enhance the purpose of attracting interest in on-going research at DUTH.

| *Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&3.1.4):* | Tick |
|---|---|
| **Worthy of merit** | |
| **Positive evaluation** | ✓ |
| **Partial positive evaluation** | |
| **Negative evaluation** | |

---

[3] The draft plan of DUTH's Intellectual Property Policy Driver and its appendices has since been approved by Senate (Senate's decision n. 46/26/11.2.2016)

### 3.1.5 Financial Strategy

- General financial strategy and management of national and international funds
- Regular budget management strategy
- Public investment management strategy
- Organisation and strategy of the Special Account for Research Funds (SARF)
- Organisation and strategy of the University Property Development and Management Company
- Existence of a Quality System for Financial Management (e.g. ISO), computerisation management and Budget monitoring (Regular Budget, Public Investments Programme, SARF Budget, etc.)

The strategic plan for development must be in compliance with rules determined by the central government. The income of DUTH consists primarily of governmental support. Funding comes through SARF via European programs and competitive external grants, and certain profits through development of university property. The governmental support has declined by 47% as compared to 2009, and is expected to decline even further. The DUTH administration has had to re-allocate funds for improving services and new initiatives to maintenance and repair problems.

To sustain its operation, DUTH is looking into alternative sources of income, including revenue generating graduate degrees and professional development courses, competitive external research grants, development of university property, fundraising, alumni, borrowing from the European investment bank, outsourcing student dormitories and restaurants to the private sector. Such initiatives, of course, must be conducted, if at all, within serious national regulatory constraints and external bureaucratic hurdles.

According to the bylaws, governmental support covers operational expenses, such as heating, building maintenance, meal plans for students, student transportation to and from the campus, student health insurance, library expenses, laboratory infrastructure improvement and other needs put forward by the various units.

Based on EEC interviews with students and faculty, students expressed satisfaction with the improved quality of meals. However, although student meals are supposed to be provided on a need basis, the current new DUTH policy is to feed everybody for free up to a certain time of the day. This policy was implemented with the agreement of the new catering contractor and upon request and pressure from student delegates. Interestingly, there were some complaints from misinformed students who felt that they were not provided meals they are entitled to suggesting that a better mechanism is needed to ensure the intended recipients of this service are served. According to the current policy, students who meet the State's criteria for free meals are identified through detailed examination of their applications, both by their Departments and the Students Welfare Office, on a monthly basis. The list of eligible students are then given to the catering contractor, who is (by legislation) paid after the end of each month according to the number of eligible students regardless if they receive the service or not. However, since many entitled students do not take advantage of this service and since attendance in not mandatory, for humanitarian purposes the contractor agreed to provide free meals to non-eligible students, as far as the total number of meals does not exceed the number of entitled students. Regardless of this generous service, the administration of the University stated it has no record of incidents of entitled students not receiving their free meals, during the past two years.

A DUTH committee runs SARF. SARF evaluates proposals from the various departments competing for internal funds and makes funding recommendations to the senate. SARF provides support to faculty competing for external grants, informs the university community of funding opportunities and gives scholarships. SARF typically charges 12% overhead on research grants unless the funding source has specific requirements.

Per the DUTH officials, SARF is supposed to operate in all electronic fashion by January 1, 2016. This would be a very important step forward, as this committee heard many complains stemming from paper bureaucracy surrounding the operation of SARF. In particular, the Orestiada campus has been hampered by the requirement for hand-written signatures on documents, which, due to the lack of an onsite office, had to be communicated back and forth via post-office mail.

Further, policies need to be put in place so that SARF better serves the faculty investigators, i.e., affords them more time to devote to technical work, and minimize the time spent on bureaucratic details. New staff positions, or redistribution of staff duties should be considered so that there is staff acting as buffers to faculty/researchers competing for external grants. A survey of research active members of the university community could reveal the needs that should be addressed by SARF in order to optimize the service that it provides.

The management and development of the university property is done by a company that operates according to the university’s best interest and keeps a percentage of the profits as determined by the University Senate. The personnel in this company are one accountant, while a second employee is put on leave without compensation. The profits are invested in closed deposits at a local bank.

According to DUTH officials, one form of development of university property is to make classrooms available to conferences for a fee. However, it is unclear whether there is data suggesting that such an approach would be profitable enough to justify plans to construct new buildings and auditoriums. EEC members visited several large auditoriums, some still under construction, each earmarked for a different department. It is unclear how many hours per week these large spaces are occupied by classes. The University could maximize the utilization of existing teaching spaces by developing and implementing a central scheduling system. An added value to this space coordination approach is that it can limit the compartmentalization of the university community and encourage more cross-disciplinary interactions.

While reconnecting with alumni is a good approach for potentially bringing in donations and also for creating internship and employment opportunities for current students, a university-wide effort devoted to creating a list of alumni and a mechanism to track them has not yet been put into place. There are, however, few exceptions of Faculties (Physical Education & Sport Science, Law) that have created a list of their alumni.

A fundraising and an alumni outreach office could help enhance the finances and also career opportunities of graduates.

| *Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&3.1.5):* | Tick |
|---|---|
| **Worthy of merit** | |
| **Positive evaluation** | ✓ |
| **Partially positive evaluation** | |
| **Negative evaluation** | |

### 3.1.6 Building and Grounds Infrastructure Strategy

- Strategy key points
- Objectives and timetables
- Measures taken to reach goals
- Deviations from model 1 campus/HEI

The Buildings and Grounds infrastructure strategy of DUTH is totally dependent on the ESPA funds as determined by the national and regional administration. Historically, DUTH was developed in four cities so it deviates significantly from the model 1 campus/HEI. Its infrastructure was developed using new and existing buildings, and continues to be inadequate in meeting the needs of its continuous growth. Specifically, the N. Hili campus in Alexandroupolis, which is home of the School of Education, as well as the old Komotini campus, which is home to three departments, are problematic.

The DUTH administration of the University is aware of the inadequacy of the above-noted buildings and all other maintenance issues. Capital plans for new buildings exist. However, hope for the timely implementation of these plans in the current financial situation, and the unknown future of ESPA funds, seem quite elusive. The administration seem confident that they can meet some of the infrastructure demands by alternative initiatives, most of which are not allowed by current legislation. It would most beneficial for the University if the administration had greater autonomy to launch and manage a serious capital campaign.

The stated goals in the IER related to finding alternative solutions focused on increasing the efficient and flexible utilization of the existing infrastructure should be implemented. There is potential for shared teaching and library space among Faculties and departments. Having department specific lecture halls and libraries is a luxury that does not exist at many universities around the world. For example, consideration could be given to maximize the utilization of the new Law building by accommodating the second department of the Faculty of Social Sciences (Dept. of Social Administration & Political Science). This would consolidate the Faculty of Social Sciences facilitating the interaction among the programs and conserving resources with a common library. In general, the management and maintenance of multiple libraries within the same campus should be reconsidered.

There are existing buildings that seem to serve the academic programs they house quite effectively. These include, but are not limited to, the School of Medicine, Teaching Hospital and School of Physical Education and Sport Science.

| *Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&3.1.6):* | Tick |
|---|---|
| **Worthy of merit** | |
| **Positive evaluation** | ✓ |
| **Partially positive evaluation** | |
| **Negative evaluation** | |

### 3.1.7 Environmental Strategy

- Recycling strategy and measures taken to reach goals
- Hazardous waste management and measures taken to reach goals
- Urban waste management and measures taken to reach goals
- Green energy strategy and measures taken to reach goals

There is a small section on the environmental strategy in the self-evaluation report. In this section, and the brief reference to these issues during the evaluation visit, it appears that DUTH's administration is quite sensitive to environmental methods. However, there is large variability from campus to campus and building to building. Recycling boxes are sparse on campus while waste management and sanitation continue to be an issue in some of the buildings. It is not clear whether the buildings under construction incorporate guidelines on energy efficiency (smart lighting, use of solar panels, etc.) and concern for the environment; this was not mentioned when the EEC toured those buildings.

The hazardous waste management appears to vary across the campuses although all agreements with the entities that manage the toxic and/or other hazardous waste of all departments are signed by the central administration according to the overall plan for the disposal of such waste. However, there is variability in the implementation of the plan due to the inherent differences in the waste management system of each city. Generally, the management of hazardous waste involves a bilateral agreement between the University and a specialized company, which is different for each city. This policy was decided mostly for economic reasons since the number of the Institute's Departments that produce hazardous waste is not large enough to justify the establishment of a central management system.

The local municipalities collect the garbage regularly. The University has also proposed to install photovoltaic units for energy and revenue generation but with the economic crisis this solution may no longer be financially viable. On a positive note, the campuses are in pristine locations so there is potential to make DUTH a preferred place for students and faculty to meet and work.

| *Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&3.1.7):* | Tick |
|---|---|
| **Worthy of merit** | |
| **Positive evaluation** | |
| **Partially positive evaluation** | ✓ |
| **Negative evaluation** | |

### 3.1.8 Social Strategy

- Exploitation and dissemination of the Institution's Research Activities for the benefit of society and economy
- Promotion of interaction between the Institution and the Labour Market
- Sustained relationships with key local and regional bodies
- Contribution to the cultural development of society, the city and the region
- Reciprocal and long-lasting relationship with the alumni community

This section of the evaluation report is based on the following data:

- The DUTH self-assessment report and other documents provided by the MODIP
- The meeting with industry, society and/or local authority representatives that took place on Monday, Nov. 30, 2015
- Meeting with some alumni, within general sessions with graduate and doctoral students
- Rest of meetings

There is evidence of an outreach attitude of DUTH, mainly implemented through its global website: http://duth.gr/ and a specialized unit of Employment and Career (DASTA), whose website:

http://dasta.duth.gr/ has received a considerable number of visits, according to the internal evaluation report. This successful initiative serves as a connection point between DUTH and the society, and it is characterized by a significant amount and a good quality of available information on different aspects, such as career development, entrepreneurship and innovation, connection with research networks, offer of specialized services, practical exercise in companies and other institutions, etc.

The research activity of DUTH is being disseminated through the aforementioned websites, or a specialized newsletter, although other channels should be further reinforced, especially through social media. Similar initiatives might be promoted for an even stronger connection with the Labor Market. Also, a regular survey of the professional career of the university graduates should be implemented, in order to better inform strategies on alignment between the offered study programs and the employment needs, or the establishment of better connections between employers and university graduates.

Based on the information collected at the meeting with the external agents, there seems to be an extensive and continuous collaboration with local and regional authorities, which was exemplified in the joint production of the regional RIS3, or several projects and general agreements signed by DUTH and several authorities. However, further alignment of DUTH excellent and noteworthy groups and projects should be reinforced through a specialized strategy for the region. The good relations with public authorities have also been achieved through joint social support actions for the students (transportation, accommodation), although there is room for further enhancement. Also, DUTH has been participating in a considerable number of ESPA projects in collaboration with the regional government, having prepared a set of project portfolios in advance, so that all related European funds can be appropriately absorbed and invested. There is also strong evidence of actions of dissemination and collaboration with the local society, in terms of cultural activities.

The relation between DUTH and the wider society seems to be rather asymmetric. Some examples of the asymmetry are the reduced contribution by the society to DUTH noted in an earlier section, the relatively small number of donations reported (e.g. by the cancer society), the lack of funding of graduate and doctoral students through joint programs, and the establishment of IP agreements that are favorable to the University. Therefore, there is a need for actions to foster local and regional society and businesses to make contributions to the university that match or exceed those made by the DUTH to society. Achieving such a balance could help address the increasingly scarce resources allocated by the Greek state. In addition, it appears that some of the existing problems are due to the multi-city multi-campus nature of DUTH and therefore DUTH should focus on overcoming difficulties regarding connection of departments and schools with the whole region and not only within the city in which the local campus belongs.

Besides some meetings with graduates organized at a departmental level, or due to anniversaries (e.g. the recent 40th DUTH anniversary), connections with alumni are mainly based on personal relations ("Our University is a family", as mentioned in several interviews); this is feasible due to the small urban nuclei of the region. However, many students come from other regions because of the nationwide system of student selection, while a great percentage of DUTH graduates do not stay at the region due to limited professional opportunities. Therefore, there is a strong need to establish a formal Alumni Association (AA) and create stable bonds between DUTH and its AA, together with an enhancement of the sense of "pride" of belonging in such a community (focusing on DUTH's strong points, awards or achievements). A database of alumni may enable a periodic and systematic survey of the professional status of DUTH graduates, thus providing evidence on the effectiveness of DUTH programs, allowing to detect problems or even to disseminate eventual success metrics, as compared with similar programs from other national or international universities. The creation of AA may also help in feeding back the experience of alumni at courses or career development events for current and future students.

A huge impediment to such outreach, however, was made clear during meetings with the Career Services administrator. Apparently, many vocal and politically demonstrative students believe that maintaining records needed to maintain communication with alumni violate core democratic principles of privacy. This fellow reported that a group of students actually blockaded him in his office to protest such an initiative for the reason mentioned.

| *Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&3.1.8):* | Tick |
|---|---|
| **Worthy of merit** | ✓ |
| **Positive evaluation** | |
| **Partially positive evaluation** | |
| **Negative evaluation** | |

### 3.1.9 Internationalization Strategy

- Integration of the international dimension in the curricula
- Integration of the international dimension in research
- Integration of the intercultural dimension within the campus
- Participation in international HEI networks
- Collaboration with HEIs in other countries (with a specific collaboration agreement) - measures taken to reach goals

The university is working towards integrating of intercultural issues within their Schools, departments and curricula. This seems to be the case in all Schools, and especially in the social sciences, law, medicine, languages, education and the humanities. This has taken various forms such as the inclusion of content and research found in similar programs offered in other countries and the research of experts from around the globe. Research in all schools and departments including, but not limited to, education, language studies, law, engineering, forestry, sports and medicine, for example, involve the work and findings of other researchers from other institutions conducting similar or related disciplinary research. DUTH schools and departments recognize that today, more than in the past, global education and communication is absolutely required to fully prepare graduates for career advancement.

Evidence of international research and sustainable, tangible collaborations with HEIs in other countries was available to the EEC on the MODIP website (http//modip.duth.gr/index.php/login). EEC members observed cancer and other research studies conducted by the Health Sciences faculty that reflect extensive international cooperation in terms of shared research findings. Other interviews and meetings with faculty of other DUTH Departments indicated collaborations with European and American universities such as Princeton (Architectural Engineering), collaboration and implementation of Japanese and American education research related practices in certain courses and clinical experiences (Education Sciences.) Other external collaborations of the Law, Classics and faculty of other departments also result in conferences, publications and exchanges of ideas.

As noted previously, student participation in global programs such as ERASMUS and attendance and participation by students and faculty in international conferences is part of the internationalization strategy. However, the number of available ERASMUS spots as well as, the number of students applying to this opportunity appeared limited. It should be noted, however, that the number of ERASMUS spots depends on the funding provided by the State's Scholarships Foundation. According to DUTH's Erasmus Bureau, the absorbency of the ERASMUS program funding is almost 98% per year. Thus, any significant increase in the available ERASMUS spots requires a significant increase in the funding provided by the State's Scholarships Foundation.

The geographical location of DUTH also lends itself to the integration of an intercultural dimension on campus. DUTH enjoys one of the largest concentrations of Muslims in all of Greece. Muslim education is taught to prospective teachers and several foreign languages reflecting the geographical region are taught. The program in Ethnic Studies addresses the socio-political aspects of Turkey’s proximity and cultural influence in the region. Notably, the MBA program has been made available in English, too, to enable participation of students from around the world.

The economic crisis has inhibited an expansion of global study opportunities but the university has nonetheless prioritized in its mission and goals faculty and student participation in global curricula, research and international collaborations with other HEIs to enhance global awareness and career opportunities of graduates. In conclusion, while there is room for improvement in collaborations with other HEIs, there is evidence of a dynamic vision and goals articulated by the administration and QAU – MODIP - to bolster the international dimension of the 8 Schools and 20 Departments of DUTH.

| *Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&3.1.9):* | Tick |
|---|---|
| **Worthy of merit** | ✓ |
| **Positive evaluation** | |
| **Partially positive evaluation** | |
| **Negative evaluation** | |

### 3.1.10 Student Welfare Strategy

- Student hostel operation and development strategy
- Student refectory development strategy
- Scholarships and prizes strategy
- Sports facilities operation and development strategy
- Cultural activities strategy
- Strategy for people with special needs

DUTH is serving approximately 25,000 students at the undergraduate and graduate levels. DUTH has limited control over the number of students assigned to undergraduate programs. In the case of several departments, the number of students enrolled poses significant challenges to the departments seeking to deliver high quality academic programs. Extremely high student-faculty ratios are untenable.

DUTH also faces the reality of not having enough residences to provide accommodation to all eligible students, especially in Alexandroupolis. To address this shortfall, the administration rents a number of rooms in nearby hotels or apartment buildings. However, from 2011 to 2015 the number of available beds did not match the increase in the number of students admitted. Not surprisingly, given the lack of affordable housing, several complaints were voiced regarding the quality of service in student rooms, especially at Alexandroupolis.

The recent improvement in food services at the Alexandroupolis campus is appreciated and reflects a major quality enhancement by the administration. Some students reported a shortage of food. This may be due to the higher than anticipated demand related to the new policy of extending the free meal service to *non-eligible* students. Finally, problems regarding transportation (frequency and number of buses) were also mentioned, especially at the Alexandroupolis campus. This is a major issue for a University operating in 4 cities and 9 campuses and has a direct impact on student engagement and the quality of the educational experience. The DUTH administration is aware and sensitive to this matter, and a request to increase the transportation budget has been already submitted to the Central Administration. It is notable that DUTH is one of few Greek HEIs to provide free transportation to students.

The university offers students an impressive sports complex that hosts various sporting events and conferences. There is a pool available to students, faculty and the community. However, there is no evidence that students outside the Physical Education and Sport Science program use these facilities. Posters, the DUTH website and the DUTH radio station seem to `help promote the social, educational and cultural events available to students and the community at large. DUTH does also offer space for conferences held by community groups and societies.

It is notable that the DUTH Teaching Hospital associated with the DUTH School of Medicine is equipped with the latest diagnostic machines and provides urgent and basic medical care to students as well as the community. In addition, the Teaching Hospital provides students and the community literature and presentations for healthy living.

During interviews with students, issues related to housing and transportation emerged. That said, it should be noted that similar housing issues arise at other HEIs in Greece and elsewhere, including accommodation for students with special needs. It is also important to mention that DUTH is the only Greek HEI that provides free transportation to students.

| *Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&3.1.10):* | Tick |
|---|---|
| **Worthy of merit** | ✓ |
| **Positive evaluation** | |
| **Partially positive evaluation** | |
| **Negative evaluation** | |

## 3.2 Strategy for Study Programmes

### 3.2.1 Programmes of Undergraduate Studies (first cycle)

- the main strengths and weaknesses of the Programmes
- the basic obligations of students, e.g. attendance of lectures, course requirements, etc.
- the way the Central Administration of the Institution deals with any remarks and recommendations that the external experts pointed out in the External Evaluation of Academic Units

The undergraduate programs of the DUTH departments can, in general, be considered as of a high quality in accordance with widely accepted international criteria. The high quality also applies to the teaching staff. The degree of implementation of information technologies in teaching appears to be satisfactory taking into account the wide acceptance of the DUTH university wide strategy for promoting teaching activities in this direction. In many courses across departments, E-class websites have been developed and refined, where both course information and supportive material are posted. The trend for hands-on approaches and close contact of students with various research processes through research dissertations, for example, is also evident.

The weaknesses of the programs, identified in the IER, can be understood as deriving from State-based issues and Institution-based issues. The State issues include, for example, the large number of new students admitted regardless of the department's capacities, and also the bureaucratic and regulatory impediments frustrating desired modifications of programs. However, while many departments have addressed the Institutional problem of too many courses, other departments have not. Another Institutional remedy needed is for addressing the lack of prerequisites in a large numbers of departments. The State regulations that do not make attendance compulsory are primarily responsible for the low level of physical participation of students in their classes. However, motivated students do tend to attend classes held by certain faculty.

Finally, in contrast to some departments' philosophy (as mentioned above) encouraging the implementation of research-based and "information technologies intensive" teaching, some departments appear reticent to follow such teaching reform goals of the administration.

The above-mentioned weaknesses of the study programs have been reported by the external evaluations of the individual departments. It is evident by the IER and meetings of the EEC and various IECs that DUTH has seriously taken these considerations into account by incorporating the proposed directions within its strategic plan and current, on going implementation process.

| *Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&3.2.1):* | Tick |
|---|---|
| **Worthy of merit** | |
| **Positive evaluation** | ✓ |
| **Partially positive evaluation** | |
| **Negative evaluation** | |

### 3.2.2 Programmes of Postgraduate Studies (second cycle)

- the main strengths and weaknesses of the Programmes
- the basic obligations of students, e.g. attendance of lectures, course requirements, etc.
- the way the Central Administration of the Institution deals with any remarks and recommendations that the external experts pointed out in the External Evaluation of Academic Units

One of the very positive aspects on the postgraduate studies programmes of DUTH is that all individual programs are in line with the ECTS direction. Furthermore, the majority of the programs have implemented the departments' external evaluation suggestions on curriculum reform towards up-to-date developments in the scientific disciplines they serve. The aligning of the rest of the departments with this directive is warranted.

It was evident that new Masters programs that respond to the demands and new realities of society have been created, such as the bilingual MBA program. More funded Masters programs could alleviate financial issues. Additional interdisciplinary options for certain related departments and programs offered in English seem warranted, and are being considered by the administration.

There are only two departments in DUTH (Architectural Engineering; Production and Management Engineering) that do not provide a Master Studies educational cycle. However, in the self-evaluations of these departments the importance of initiating such a cycle is highlighted considering the Masters Studies function as one of the most important short-term objectives for their advancement. In addition, 6 of 18 DUTH departments have more than one Master program (Environmental Engineering, Law, Medicine, Education Sciences in Early Childhood, Primary Level Education, Forestry and Management of the Environment and Natural Resources). Moreover, there are 3 inter-departmental Master programs, 5 inter-university Master programs and 1 Transnational Master program (Language, Literature and Civilization of the Black Sea Countries).

The comments of the external evaluations on the postgraduate studies have been taken seriously into consideration. However, implementation of certain recommendations responsive to the designated weaknesses of each individual program appear to be subject to actions and authorisations beyond the control and jurisdiction of departments and that of the University.

| *Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (& 3.2.2):* | Tick |
|---|---|
| **Worthy of merit** | |
| **Positive evaluation** | ✓ |
| **Partially positive evaluation** | |
| **Negative evaluation** | |

### 3.2.3 Programmes of Doctoral Studies (third cycle)

- the main strengths and weaknesses of the Programmes
- the basic obligations of students, e.g. attendance of lectures, course requirements, etc.
- the way the Central Administration of the Institution deals with any remarks and recommendations that the external experts pointed out in the External Evaluation of Academic Units

The documentation regarding the doctoral studies is more limited, as compared to that of the first and second cycle studies. Such lack of documentation may be explained by the fact that doctoral studies are greatly conditioned either by national regulations or by the departments, which are responsible for them. There seems to exist a great disparity regarding the number of doctoral students, titles awarded, or specific quality requirements for the PhD degrees, etc.

The self-evaluation report acknowledges (p. 68) that few data are available at a central level, except the number of doctoral candidates, which is not always consistent (1712 according to B.2.2 or 2066 according to general table 1a). Although this was not clear during the evaluation it appears that the difference corresponds to the candidates that exceeded the threshold for obtaining their doctorate. An increase of 28% and 54% in terms of registered doctoral students is reported as compared to the academic years of 2009-2010 and 2007-2008. However, the number of doctoral degrees awarded is relatively low (in the range of 60-70 per year) and has been rather constant in the last five years (p.75).

Also, the distribution of graduate students is largely uneven, from a high of 510 or 366 in the departments of Medicine or Law, respectively, to a few dozen for a number of other departments. The same disparity can be seen with respect to the rate of degrees awarded per registered students (e.g. only 19 doctoral degrees awarded from the Department of Law in the 5-year period of 2010-

2014 out of 366 registered students in 2014), vs. 42 degrees out of 69 registered students at the department of Electrical Engineering.

The requirements for the doctoral degree vary greatly, from a minimum number of 2 indexed-journal papers in some departments of the Polytechnic School to almost no specific requirements in other departmental programs.

The aforementioned data point out to a first set of weak points of the doctoral studies at DUTH, which have also been observed at other Greek academic institutions, to wit:

- A large number of registered doctoral students with a small graduation rate, which eventually reflects an excessive average duration of successful doctoral theses, and a high rate of students who abandon their studies
- A great disparity exists among departments in terms of the number of registered and active students, awarded degrees and quality indicators and requirements.
- The lack of a coordinated data monitoring and collection system in order to detect and inform specific remedial actions regarding the doctoral studies
- The need for a central university regulation and thesis quality control policy, which may consider the particular aspects of each knowledge area

With regard to the above-noted issues, DUTH authorities might consider the Salzburg I (2005) and Salzburg II (2010) recommendations regarding the organization of doctoral studies at a European level, or similar strategies that have been followed in the North American doctoral programs and the corresponding Schools of Graduate or Doctoral Studies.

On the other hand, evidence from the meetings with the doctoral students or the documentation point out to limited funding of the doctoral students in order to carry out their thesis work. Besides the need for funding of the necessary laboratory installations and material (see also acknowledgement at p.32 of the self-evaluation report), the most urgent and persistent need refers to funding of fellowships and international mobility as reflected in the university goals. Taking into account the reduced support at a national level, the DUTH strategic plan appropriately includes an increase of the number of fellowships to excellent students from its own research funds. Such a strategy should be implemented on a regular basis (in its current form it is part of a general plan for funding of doctoral and postdoctoral students or young professors), and should be complemented with teaching assistantships (see for example, some interesting initiatives for such financial aid through complementary teaching tasks at the Masters programs with tuition), a wider participation in national and international calls for funding (e.g. at the EU-sponsored Marie Sklodowska-Curie program), and of course an increased number of competitive research grants.

With respect to international mobility and professional research careers, participation in the Euraxess network can be considered as a positive initiative, although international collaborations should be further employed in terms of joint supervision of doctoral theses, international doctoral programs (only a collaboration with Cyprus is mentioned), participation in doctoral summer schools and doctoral consortia in the frame of international conferences and research networks, or the enactment of doctoral student exchange agreements in the frame of Erasmus Plus program. Also, specific financial aid for international mobility from the University funds should be considered.

The self-evaluation report includes certain recommendations extracted from the External Evaluation reports of the departments. No remedial actions from the central DUTH administration have been described, probably due to the decentralized nature of the doctoral studies, as mentioned above. However, MODIP notes that DUTH has drawn up a regulation for postgraduate and doctoral studies to process the recommendations in the EERs of the departments and, now, of this DUTH EER (http://duth.gr/education/postgraduate/.)

The attendance of doctoral courses depends on the specific internal regulations of each doctoral program, which may vary a lot. On the other hand, the DUTH General Regulation of the Graduate Studies, approved on June 2010 (http://duth.gr/education/academic/kanonismos-duth.pdf) mentions that a doctoral program may require the attendance of some graduate courses if the candidate comes from knowledge areas which are different from the one chosen for the doctoral work.

In spite of all recommendations noted above, it should be acknowledged that the global external conditions of funding or regulations greatly influence the chances for better doctoral studies. Within this wider context there is evidence of important achievements with respect to the quantity and quality of the doctoral degrees awarded by several programs at DUTH, which is based on their good research level and productivity of some, but not all, faculty members. On the other hand, the strategic plan acknowledges the need for a further funding from its own internal resources and an extension of the international collaborations. However, there is room for significant enhancements at the institutional level, especially in terms of monitoring, coordination and quality control of the doctoral programs. It is also important to limit the number of available doctoral programs; introducing more doctoral degrees may dilute their vigor and quality.

In closing, many of the problems present at DUTH are inherent in the Greek higher education organization and funding tradition of doctoral studies. A more comprehensive collection of data and coordination related to doctoral studies by MODIP is warranted. Positive aspects include the overall quality of some research groups and some indications for further internal funding for fellowships. It appears that the applicable national traditions and regulations needing modification are mostly responsible for the majority of existing issues and problems noted herein.

| *Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (& 3.2.3):* | Tick |
|---|---|
| **Worthy of merit** | |
| **Positive evaluation** | |
| **Partially positive evaluation** | ✓ |
| **Negative evaluation** | |

### *3.3 Profile of the Institution under evaluation - Conclusions and recommendations*

- Underline specific positive points:
- Underline specific negative points:
- Make your suggestions for further development of the positive points
- *Make your suggestions on needed steps for improvement*:

Overall, the self-evaluation process has strengthened the quality culture across the University, facilitated the development of better data acquisition systems, and led to an accurate and timely recording of the functioning and operation of the institution. At the same time, the process highlighted weaknesses in the quality assurance system and the self-evaluation procedure of the institution leading to the development of strategies in specific areas.

Both the Rector and Vice-Rectors, as well as the MODIP team have a clear and positive vision regarding the University and the evaluation processes, while they have established a relevant mission and important goals to be achieved.

Several initiatives envisaged and led by DUTH authorities regarding Life Long Learning or International programs offered in English are very positive and may be crucial, since they take into consideration the specific features of this University.

Strong ties with the local and regional society are observed, while the DUTH shows a special sensitivity to all social issues regarding student welfare.

The reported weaknesses in the self-evaluation procedure are external to the University and point to the certain bureaucratic, untenable conditions on the education system. However, although these obstacles limit to an extent the ability of DUTH to develop meaningful long-term strategies there is still potential for internal short and long term improvements the MODIP team aptly seeks to make, including an effort to continually reexamine issues in the newly structured internal quality assurance processes of the institution.

The DUTH administration and MODIP places great weight on the external factors which, logically, cannot be easily controlled. Nonetheless, there is the need to further adequately identify and analyze the internal limitations and problems that can be addressed and remedied within the current external constraints and obstacles to growth and sustenance.

DUTH’s infrastructure includes 9 campuses in 4 cities so it deviates significantly from the model 1 campus/HEI. This leads to significant infrastructure challenges and problems. These problems remain a priority for the University authorities with limited financial autonomy to address them. Likewise, there are student welfare issues previously discussed regarding food, accommodations and transportation

Internationalization could be further enhanced, especially in terms of student and teacher mobility, while collaboration among strong research teams that work at different campuses could be more sufficiently exploited as elaborated in the mission and goals of DUTH.

Although several doctoral programs show positive results, there is a need for effective coordination, monitoring and funding from the university.

Support of teaching and learning innovation is limited, although the DUTH authorities are aware of this issue as borne out of the IER and meetings held by the EEC.

The flow of services seems to be unidirectional, from the University to the Society and there is an insufficient connection of the University with the Alumni.

Bureaucracy and resistance to relinquish paper-based administration have caused much dissatisfaction in the university community; the problem is particularly pronounced due to the geographically distributed nature of DUTH.

There was no IP protection policy for academic research until recently (after EEC's visit). The draft plan of DUTH's Intellectual Property Policy Driver and its appendices were approved at the February 2016 Senate meeting.

There is no systematic effort to reach alumni and seek their help in meeting the university objectives

There is no fundraising office.

Next steps in the self-evaluation process should primarily focus on clarifying the weaknesses in the internal processes of the institution itself and developing specific alternative strategies to try to overcome the external/central obstacles and bureaucratic restrictions of the education system.

A wide consultation plan to inform and communicate with the University community and make all feel included in the process of evaluation might improve the acceptance and participation by all sectors and stakeholders.

Clarify the unique features of this University alluded to in the IER and prioritize the actions that capitalize on them, so that these priorities can be understood and supported by the state, the regional administration and society.

Disseminate and further coordinate with the academic community and the local and regional authorities and society, all the initiatives related to social issues and student welfare.

The implementation of a University wide evaluation should involve a cohesive set of metrics applied across departments and disciplines as well as University wide goals accepted by all involved. This will improve the collective understanding of institutional priorities and key performance indicators, and will improve the participation of the stakeholders in the self-evaluation process.

A comprehensive re-evaluation of space allocation is imminently needed to increase the efficient and flexible utilization of existing infrastructure. Furthermore, the University should be granted the autonomy to launch and manage a serious capital campaign to internally address their infrastructure needs.

The University should seek alternative solutions to finance and monitor the quality of the services provided to the students. Strategies should focus on engaging the students and their associations to self-monitor and manage these services. Such strategy could involve the formation of University Student Services Council of student representatives from all campuses nominated/elected by their constituencies.

The University should implement concrete actions regarding several problems, such as international mobility, coordination and financial support of doctoral studies, teaching and learning innovations, creation of further links with Alumni and increase the flow of resources from the society.

The university should swiftly move in the direction of electronic administration, electronic signatures and teleconferencing.

As a way to improve the doctoral program and as noted in the IER goals, there should be more emphasis on seeking competitive external funds, and there should be a mechanism to support researchers seeking such funds. Reduced teaching loads should be considered for faculty who conduct research studies and bring in competitive external funds. According to the State's regulations each member of the academic staff must teach a minimum of 6 hours per week. However, it has been reported that the actual workload of several faculty members far exceeds the minimum weekly load due to staff shortages.

The university should consider additional tuition based Masters programs in English focusing on the university's strengths that would be a pole of attraction for neighbouring countries as well as for Greek students. Such programs could support research and salaries of doctoral students.

A better system is needed to facilitate the transfer to businesses the technology developed at the university. That system should protect the university's intellectual property.

# 4 INTERNAL SYSTEM OF QUALITY ASSURANCE

## *4.1 Quality Assurance (QA) Policy and Strategy*

- the Institution’s policy and goals regarding QA and Improvement
- whether the Institution has developed a specific system of QA
- how the Institution’s internal QA system has been organized
- how the students and staff of the Institution are protected from biased interventions and discriminations
- whether a detailed implementation guide has been put together, containing an analysis of the QA system’s operating procedures
- the involvement of students in QA
- how the Institution evaluates the effectiveness of its QA system regarding the achievement of its goals

This section describes the EEC’s findings regarding DUTH’s system of Internal Quality Assurance. The EEC first studied the description of the system as presented in MODIP’s highly detailed Internal Evaluation Report (IER). The EEC utilized the report and its findings as the basis and framework for questioning and evaluation during the interviews and site visits conducted by the EEC. During the interviews and site-visits, the EEC members obtained a picture of the system’s attributes and its “targets.” The findings of the EEC that emerged with respect to the Internal Quality Assurance System of DUTH were consistent with the claims made in its IER.

In the IER, the focus and organization of the QA system focuses on the following areas, which reflect the Mission, Goals and Organizational Strategy, discussed in section 3.1.1 and 3.1.2 of the IER, to wit:

1. Quality Assurance policy and strategy
2. Academic’ programs and awarded degrees planning, approval, checking and evaluation
3. Teaching and learning. Students’ evaluation
4. Students’ admission, progress and academic’ recognition
5. Quality assurance relevant to the teaching personnel
6. Learning sources and students’ support
7. Data and indexes registration and analysis information systems
8. Publicly available information
9. Constant monitoring and periodical review of the programs
10. Periodical internal evaluation

A distinct DUTH policy regarding Q.A. and improvement was evident in the IER and during the site visit. There was also evidence of clear and measurable objective goals deriving from this policy as follows.

The University's Quality Assurance Unit established and carried out DUTH's policy for Quality Assurance and Improvement. The policy included the main goal of coordination, support and monitoring of both the internal and external evaluation procedures for accreditation of the academic or departmental programs and the internal system for the University's quality assurance.

The EEC considered the University's policy for Quality Assurance and Improvement in terms of the five (5) approaches in its system, as follows:

1. Formulation and documentation of the vision and strategy about work quality and services provided in the frame of a quality culture.
2. Research, analysis and definition of acceptable international standards of Quality Assurance standards for all the University's complex and interwoven operational components (all structures, personnel, work and services)
3. Constant monitoring, recording and evaluation of the quality indexes of the University's work, services and activities
4. Planning and implementation of quality support and improvement actions for the University's work, services and activities
5. Accreditation and periodic evaluation of the assurance and accreditation system, in order to be in sync with the strategic choices of the University and the State.

The EEC reviewed the objective goals of the University's Quality Assurance and Accreditation policy as stated in its comprehensive IER. The extensive interviews with the QAU MODIP, Departmental IECs, faculty and administrators, revealed the efficacy of these goals. Each of the goals noted below are in the process of being implemented or more fully structured. The key goals articulated in the IER and during the interviews and presentations include the following:

1. Structure and perform continuous evaluation of the University's functions, operations and quality of services provided.
2. Define general and specific quality indicators for all the University's components (structures, personnel, work and services).
3. Complete and clarify evaluation procedures through workshops and a complete website for the members of the academic community.
4. Develop, operate and constantly improve the information system for information gathering and users' training.
5. Establish and operate a teaching support agency.
6. Establish a climate of motivation and excellence through recognition and rewards for individuals, groups, academic units and administrative services.
7. Intervention for the revision of the promotion system for all categories of the personnel, by using international quality standards and implementing actions for attracting highly educated and qualified scientific and administrative personnel.
8. Implementation of actions for enhancing the University's international cooperation, outreach and recruitment with collaborations on national and international levels.
9. Implementation of actions to promote and advertise the University and its work at the national and international level.

The EEC found that university had indeed developed an acceptable Quality Assurance system that is continuously upgraded consistent to the instructions and guidelines of the P.Q.A. (Principle for Quality Assurance) it has identified in its IER and during presentations by MODIP.

**How is the internal QA system of the University organized?**

The internal QA system of the University is organized in six (6) levels:

1. The University's Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) submits the internal evaluation report of the University and identifies quality assurance issues to the departments and agencies of the University. THE QAU relies heavily on the annual internal reports of the Departments in formulating recommendations for improvement.
2. The Internal Evaluation Groups (IEG) of the University's academic units submit annual internal reports with qualitative and quantitative data for the implementation of their educational, research, administrative and social welfare functions, to the QAU.
3. The Heads of the Administrative Services and the Departments/Schools of the University provide qualitative and quantitative data for the structure, work and services provided annually and in exceptional case, whenever it is asked for.
4. The teaching personnel at all levels provide data for their educational/academic, research, and administrative and social mobility on an annual basis. However, there are exceptions.
5. The students of all the University's academic programs are given the opportunity to evaluate the educational/academic, administrative work and other operations of the University through questionnaires and/or digital and printed forms. However, there are no program-wide "exit surveys" available to students. Such program evaluations could help identify areas of weakness to address as well as areas of strength to sustain.
6. The Employment and Career Agency that is planning to collect information about graduates and, more closely, the current labor market.

The QA system as currently structured and implemented contributes to the university's efficacious monitoring and evaluation of academic programs. The QA system also aims at enhancing the functionality of the various agencies including, but not limited to, those responsible for the infrastructure, quality of university life for all personnel, career development and social welfare of students. The steps involved in the QA system University are meant to contribute to the achievement of the university's goals and the improvement of academic programs quality. As noted in the IER and as borne out during interviews and meetings, the QA system has involved the following:

1. Submission and review of Annual Internal Reports from all the University Departments,
2. Implementation of, or responses to, the external evaluations of all the University Departments.
3. Submission and review of the present University Self-Evaluation Report, and also of Self-Evaluation Reports for the years 2006-2010 and 2010-2012,
4. Review of constructive comments and remarks from External Experts,
5. Reviews of the academic programs of the Departments, based on the External Experts' reviews,
6. Review of the University's QA strategy based on the information and data collected and evaluated in the framework of the current comprehensive QA system.

Although participation of students has been planned and facilitated by the University, problems have been encountered, as already mentioned in previous sections. The QA policy and strategy should seek and establish alternative and innovative forms of student participation at all levels.

| *Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&4.1):* | Tick |
|---|---|
| **Worthy of merit** | ✓ |
| **Positive evaluation** | |
| **Partially positive evaluation** | |
| **Negative evaluation** | |

## *4.2 Design, approval, monitoring and evaluation of the study programmes and degrees awarded*

- whether the learning outcomes have been clearly formulated and whether they have been published
- whether the programmes are designed in such a way as to involve students and other stakeholders in the work
- how the achievement of learning outcomes is monitored
- whether there is a published Guide regarding the organization of programmes of study
- whether the ECTS system is taken into consideration and implemented
- whether there is a periodic evaluation of the programmes according to set procedures and criteria aimed at safeguarding their consistency and regular updating
- the student participation in the QA procedure of the study programmes
- whether the programmes include well-structured international mobility and -where appropriate- placement opportunities

Academic programs are required to define and publish educational outcomes. The goals and content of each program’s coursework, together with the expected outcomes, are described in all the academic’ programs of most of the University Departments and for all levels of academic study.

Some courses outlines, with the goals, content and expected outcomes to achieve the desired degree are published both on the Internet (at the central website of each Department and at the courses’ websites/e-class) and in printed form. However, this is not the case with all courses across programs.

The intent is that the academic programs and awarded degrees are monitored, checked and approved regularly by the departmental and school level faculty committees, IECs and participation of the department Chairs, Deans, Rector and Faculty Senate for both the maintenance, modification, improvement and formulation of new academic programs. These objectives represent a significant work in progress.

The EEC notes that the active involvement and leadership of the QAU of the University and MODIP is intended to ensure quality of its internal procedures and, as a result, enhanced approval, monitoring and evaluation processes.

The EEC observes that there is still a need, recognized by the Administration and QAU, to obtain the participation of outside professionals to serve formally on the QAU involving it. Input and feedback from outside professionals can strengthen their role of the QAU in monitoring and approving academic programs and the operations of the key university agencies. Nonetheless, the IER notes that opinions and views were collected from outside professionals in employment fields related to academic programs during certain reviews of academic programs.

The QAU and MODIP noted that although a comprehensive "analytic guide" is in the process of being finalized, standards and short guides have already been promulgated to the departments and used with reference to the annual internal reports, course outlines, teacher's inventory form and the course/teaching/teacher evaluation questionnaire.

The QAU and MODIP made clear during interviews and meetings with the EEC that the process of developing a final guide involved identifying and organizing the essential rubrics of the quality assurance system, the latest PQA guidelines consistent with the relevant, latest legislative developments guiding the QA process for Greek Universities.

The EEC noted that University students actively contribute to the University QA and improvement by the opportunity to evaluate their educational/academic coursework. However, they need to participate, as noted earlier, in evaluating administrative work and operations of the university through questionnaires and/or digital and printed forms. Involvement of students in QA committees was practically nil, apparently due to the nature of student politics against any evaluations and, perhaps, meaningful opportunities to participate.

DUTH embraced the transition to the ECTS system on a university-wide basis. The schools and departments were engaged in this challenge, which resulted in many modifications to the programs of various departments, although some problems still persist, as in the case of the Department of Architecture. This transition as implemented has placed DUTH in a position to be able to enable more international mobility of its students vis-à-vis participation in and/or graduation from programs now on par with similar programs at other universities. However, there is evidence that international mobility needs to be further facilitated consistent with the university's objectives. Such international mobility also includes the ability of students to apply for positions related to their preparation in a well-structured program with appropriate and transferrable courses and credits.

The intent is clearly stated and was reiterated during the meetings with the IECs, for the academic programs and awarded degrees to be monitored, checked and approved regularly by the departmental and school level faculty committees, IECs and participation of the department Chairs, Deans, Rector and Senate for both the maintenance, modification, improvement and formulation of new academic programs.

The EEC notes that the continued active involvement and leadership of the QAU of the University and MODIP is key to ensuring quality of its internal procedures and, as a result, enhanced approval. Monitoring and evaluation processes.

*Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&4.2):*

| | Tick |
|---|---|
| **Worthy of merit** | |
| **Positive evaluation** | ✓ |
| **Partially positive evaluation** | |
| **Negative evaluation** | |

## *4.3 Teaching and learning - Assessment by students*

- whether multiple and coherent learning paths are provided according to the needs of students in the Institution's Departments / Faculties
- how proper guidance and support is offered to students by the Departments / Faculties' teaching staff
- whether students are informed clearly and in detail regarding the strategy of evaluation that is implemented for their programme of study, the exams or other methods of assessment they will be subjected to, what is expected of them and which criteria will be applied for the evaluation of their performance
- whether there is a formal procedure for addressing complaints and objections by students in the Departments / Faculties of the Institution

**Monitoring of achievement of learning outcomes**

As noted in the DUTH IER and during interviews, learning outcomes of students are evaluated and graded mostly through exams at the end of the semester. Other traditional methods are also used to a lesser extent, such as interim assessments, quizzes, interim tests, and interim and/or final papers. More innovative procedures for assessment related to alternative teaching and learning strategies are scarcely employed, and they should be further promoted as a tool for encouraging participation and enhancing learning. The learning and teaching support office envisaged by DUTH in its goals could play a productive role in teacher training and student awareness that includes the practice of consistent and dynamic assessment techniques.

In each DUTH Departmental website, an analytical Guide for the relevant academic programs, for both graduate and postgraduate levels, is available. The academic' program Guide is also in the annual internal report of each Department and it is also available in its printed edition at the Secretariat of most of the Departments. This Guide contains all the basic information/details about the courses and the academic' program.

Currently, the IER notes that the ECTS system is implemented in all DUTH programs of graduate and postgraduate academic. This seems to be the case, in accordance with the sweeping new regulations for all Greek universities implemented several years ago. This revolutionary change has laid the groundwork for enhancing student mobility for students seeking to continue their studies abroad and for international students seeking to pursue studies at DUTH.

The meetings and interviews with the QAU, MODIP and IECs confirmed that regular, periodic evaluation of the programs, with procedures and standards, must continue to ensure quality of programs. As noted previously, the EEC finds that the evaluation and monitoring of academic programs did occur during the Internal evaluations conducted by the various departments and through the recommended Annual Reports of departments. The monitoring procedure is also implemented through the internal quality assurance program of the QAU for the academic programs (graduate, postgraduate and life-long learning programs) based on the recognized academic accreditation standards.

However, students only partially and sporadically participate in QA procedures of the overall academic programs. Some students interviewed reported that they rarely are given the opportunity to evaluate the components of the educational work through questionnaires and/or digital and printed forms for general data and views on registration. However, many current students and alumni did participate in meetings with the EEC. They reported their satisfaction with their programs as well as their issues related to academics, opportunities to “cross academic borders”.

Students’ representatives are supposed to participate in the Internal Evaluation Groups (IEGs) of the University’s Departments and in the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) of the University. It was reported that student participation on committees is frustrated since they must be elected to such committees and certain student political groups effectively block or lobby against such elections. The political realities of Greek university life powerfully pervade and influence achievement of many evaluation strategies and outcomes.

Mobility in the academic programs is facilitated through European exchange programs at the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Erasmus provides for internships and education programs and training but DUTH has very few students who profit from this program. Partnerships between few DUTH schools and departments involve some collaboration with numerous universities abroad. The economic crisis that has decimated the incomes of most Greeks has also made study abroad an elusive if not impossible dream for students.

It bears noting that he University is aware of the need to ensure students and personnel receive certain legislatively determined protections to enhance their university experience. Routes are available for reporting problems or issue such as the Students Issues Committees, an Academic Consultant of the Department of Academic and Student Care. The IER noted that a Student’s Office of the Ombudsman is in the process of being created.

| *Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&4.3):* | Tick |
|---|---|
| **Worthy of merit** | |
| **Positive evaluation** | ✓ |
| **Partially positive evaluation** | |
| **Negative evaluation** | |

## 4.4 Admission of students, progression and recognition of studies

- whether the procedures and criteria for admission to the second and third cycle of studies are implemented with consistency and transparency
- whether there are clear and distinct procedures within the Departments/Faculties, as regards recognition of higher education degrees, periods of study and knowledge acquired at an earlier stage
- whether there are clear and distinct procedures of recognition of study periods and prior learning (including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning)
- whether there are clear procedures in place regarding the cooperation of other Institutions with national ENIC/NARIC centres for ensuring coherent recognition and mobility among programmes within / among Institution (s)
- whether students are provided with detailed information (e.g. Diploma Supplement) regarding the degrees conferred to them, the achieved learning outcomes as well as the framework, the level and the content of studies they successfully completed
- whether the Institution has in place processes and tools to collect, monitor and use information regarding student progression

The admission and access to the second (Masters) and third (PhD) cycles of studies are regulated by national standards, although they are complemented by the internal regulations of DUTH and the departments that are in charge of the corresponding degrees. Thus, the criteria and procedures for admission are made public in the corresponding web sites (e.g. http://pms.agro.duth.gr/ for the graduate programs of the department of Agricultural Development). There is no evidence of an inconsistent or non-transparent use of such criteria and procedures.

Given that DOATAP (ex DIKATSA) is the responsible agency for all procedures regarding recognition of study programs that were held abroad, the DUTH administration deals only with recognition of study periods and degrees. On the one hand, the administrative units follow the rules of the 4115/2013 law regarding internal national mobility, while they also provide the corresponding certificates to the students who want to move to other national study programs. It should be remarked that there is no evidence regarding procedures for recognition of non-formal or informal studies at the undergraduate level, since this is an issue regulated by the state. However, related merits (e.g. language courses and degrees, practical experience in companies) may be included in the application forms for graduate and doctoral studies and therefore the corresponding committees may take them into account in the selection process. However, the mechanisms and criteria for such recognition greatly vary among the departments who are responsible for the graduate and doctoral programs. A more uniform and transparent definition of these procedures may be helpful.

As mentioned above, DOATAP is the organization, which manages all issues regarding recognition of international degrees. With respect to the horizontal coordination with other institutions and countries, there is some evidence of connection with national ENIC/NARIC centers (e.g. http://career.duth.gr/cms/files/leonardo/langprep/ireland/cd/guide.pdf for Ireland), through the Networking office of DASTA (http://career.duth.gr/portal/), although its use at the portal should be enhanced and made more prominent.

The promotion and establishment of Diploma Supplements forms part of the strategic plan of the University, which has approved and published the templates for such supplements. However, as the self-evaluation report acknowledges (p.110), the Diploma Supplements have not been adopted and applied yet by a number of Departments. In several cases the corresponding information can be found in special certificates, grades or needs to be completed manually through academic study guides or other official general documents. For the sake of international mobility and career development this procedure should be adopted and applied by all department as soon as possible.

The collection of data regarding student progress is made through the Class Web software application, a package that is being also used by other Greek Universities. On the other hand, cumulative and other statistical data are fed to the Departmental Self-evaluation reports (as e.g. http://modip.duth.gr/reports/internal/annual/2013-2014_MOR_BIOL.pdf for the department of Molecular Biology and Genetics), while the same data are stored and processed by MODIP in order to extract global statistical indicators. Therefore, it seems that the information system that is in place is capable of dealing in an effective way with the complete lifecycle of the data regarding student progress. In general, however, it was difficult to obtain specific data regarding this section.

| *Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&4.4):* | Tick |
|---|---|
| **Worthy of merit** | |
| **Positive evaluation** | ✓ |
| **Partially positive evaluation** | |
| **Negative evaluation** | |

## *4.5 Quality Assurance as regards the teaching staff*

- how it is guaranteed that the vacancy notices and recruitment of teaching staff include procedures which provide assurance that all new teaching staff members have at least the basic teaching skills
- opportunities offered to the teaching staff for their professional/scientific advancement
- how potential weaknesses of the teaching staff are identified as regards the delivery of their teaching courses
- the Institution’s procedures for the support of new teaching staff as regards the teaching and evaluation methods
- how scientific activity is assessed and encouraged among the teaching staff in order to strengthen the connection between education and research

- the procedures in place so that the teaching staff members receive the necessary feedback on their personal performance as well as on the opinion of students
- whether a regulatory framework is in place for the investigation of disciplinary and academic misconduct of the teaching staff

National laws and the corresponding decisions of the DUTH Senate regulate vacancies and recruitment of new staff. Therefore, trial lectures are organized for each candidate, which are accessible to students and academic staff. However, the teaching capacity regarding promotions of existing staff is typically measured only by the performance of the teachers in the student questionnaires.

On the other hand, the teaching weaknesses of the academic staff may be detected through the collection of student satisfaction data. The process of data collection seems to be the responsibility of the individual instructors so compliance is an issue. It includes several variants that may be adopted on order to promote student participation, while the questionnaire follows typical international templates. Thus feedback is provided to the teachers under evaluation, while the head of the Department has access to all data, so that remedial actions may be enacted. A very interesting action has been mentioned in p.65 of the self-evaluation report, regarding the overall satisfaction of the graduate and doctoral students regarding the complete set of courses or the supervision capacities of the professors. Such action is considered to be a positive one and it should be adopted for all three cycles of studies preferably after the degree is awarded (i.e., as an exit survey). Also, the current organization of regular seminars by the MODIP in all campuses seems to be an additional highly commendable means for a better adoption of these mechanisms by the global academic community (professors, students and administrative staff).

The general support to career development of the academic staff is substantiated by general measures, such as support to academic leave (partial or full sabbatical leaves) or a reduced financial aid for up to one scientific conference or course per year. Also, international mobility for research and teaching is promoted through Erasmus agreements or other bilateral agreements in the frame of funded projects. However, according to the existing data the rate of international mobility of the academic staff is rather limited and should be further promoted and supported by the Institution. The deployment of access to the Euraxess research network can be considered as a positive step in this direction. On the other hand, the institution may provide further seminars on the opportunities for career development, especially for the new academic staff, in conjunction with the general support regarding the preparation of competitive national and European research proposals (see envisaged actions in the general DUTH research strategy) or technology and knowledge transfer. Therefore, a concrete plan for career development might be included in the new strategic plan with a coherent set of specific support actions.

The self-evaluation report acknowledges the lack of specific measures for teaching support to all academic staff, especially the new professors, adducing the lack of sufficient financial and human resources. Some isolated initiatives in several departments were detected, as a professor at the department of Molecular Biology and Genetics. The DUTH envisages within its strategic plan the creation of an Office of Teaching Support, although no specific content or actions have been presented. The University is strongly encouraged to follow the example and well-established practices of the majority of universities around the world regarding Teaching and Learning Support, equipped by a group of professors and experts with enhanced pedagogical knowledge (typically from the generic departments of education but also from other disciplines in order to be able to cover the didactics of concrete knowledge areas) that they are able to communicate. This faculty support office should have a specific budget in to cover its costs, typically for invited courses or professional development sessions (both online and face to face) and to publish an annual offering of courses and professional development, with special emphasis on a program for the new teaching staff, or the doctoral students who are initiated in teaching tasks. Also, this office might provide support to the academic staff on demand, especially in order to put in practice academic innovation, such as project-based, inquiry-based, collaborative learning, use of ICT to support the learning processes, etc. Finally, specific University-level calls might be published regarding pedagogical innovation projects for groups of teachers of a set of courses, a department, etc. The merits obtained by the academic staff related to pedagogical training and innovation should be considered as merits in the process of academic promotion, while awards for innovative teaching, or student satisfaction should be promoted. This office could explore offering faculty teaching resources such as www.Lynda.com as well as encouraging mentoring practices by senior faculty members. Post-tenure review of teaching practices is another strategy to help faculty members utilize motivational instructional practices.

The global scientific activity is typically assessed using faculty promotion procedures, as regulated at the national level. On the other hand, internal procedures have been established for the evaluation of the academic performance every five years, outside of promotions. There is no specific evidence of the results of both evaluation procedures, i.e. whether they have been shown to be effective in identifying cases of meritorious or inadequate performances of the academic staff. There is also no evidence of the application of the regulations regarding disciplinary and academic misconduct, i.e. regulations have been established but no assessment of the process has been reported. It is mentioned that no cases of misconduct have been reported in the last five years. A more systematic monitoring and evaluation of these processes could be very helpful, together with an update and promotion of the ethics codes, especially regarding the supervision of theses.

With respect to the major issue of connection between research and teaching, it is clear that second and third cycle studies are much more appropriate for such link, as DUTH suggests. More specifically, the best connection is related to the kink between permanent staff research with the Master’s theses and of course the doctoral theses, although graduate courses should be carefully selected so that they can reflect both academic staff expertise and coherence of the offered programs. However, there is no evidence that all theses are published and/or presented internationally, which leads to limited research productivity of graduate students. The aforementioned issue is even more important in the design of the undergraduate study programs, since it typically leads to an excessive growth of the offered courses, as several departmental external evaluations have already mentioned in their reports. Therefore, a careful study lead by the Departments and coordinated by the University, may indicate a global strategy, which might embed research in the normal teaching procedures. This strategy may include an exposure of research in the overall DUTH activities, the establishment of explicit links between concrete research results preferably generated by the academic staff and “standard” textbook knowledge, the organization of seminars on concrete research-oriented topics related to the courses, and of course the connection of the research work with the undergraduate theses, as well as other projects or essays within the normal learning and assessment flow of the courses.

Another major obstacle to faculty performance in many departments is the inability to replace retired faculty members. This places an onerous burden on remaining faculty, many who voluntarily teach additional courses and hours and serve on committees without additional compensation.

| *Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&4.5):* | Tick |
|---|---|
| **Worthy of merit** | |
| **Positive evaluation** | ✓ |
| **Partially positive evaluation** | |
| **Negative valuation** | |

## 4.6 Learning resources and student support

- whether there are procedures for the systematic monitoring, evaluation, review and improvement of the appropriateness and effectiveness of supporting services available to students
- the available support services in regard to Libraries, Information systems and infrastructure
- the procedure in place for offering individual assistance (counselling and tutoring) to students

The support services to the students are widespread and refer both to collective and individual ones. The vast majority of the services are oriented to the global student population of the University (ICT, or professional career and networking), while others are organized more specifically at a Campus, Faculty or Department level (e.g. libraries, welcome days). Finally, there are limited mentoring-counseling services, together with sanitary-psychological support, which are offered both globally as far as information is concerned, and individually. It should be mentioned that most of these services are the ones that are typically offered at most Greek Universities, while others have been adapted or promoted specifically at DUTH (e.g. ICT services to multi-faculty multi-campus structures, or individual psychological support and professional networking).

The resources and quality of the Library services appear adequate, given the data included in the documentation, although these services are not evenly distributed among Departments (e.g. Faculty of Health Sciences vs. the Pedagogy-oriented Departments at the Alexandroupolis Campus). Some deficiencies have been observed as, for example, the lack of appropriate space and installations for work in groups, in both formal Libraries and the informal common-use facilities as have been shown to be very effective and efficient in several universities around the world. Of course, as almost is true for every other service at DUTH, the library services have been affected to a certain degree by the severe global budget cuts during the last five years. Thus, direct state funding has been reduced with respect to acquisition and access to journals and books, as well as to the number of librarians and other support personal. Some special services deserve special attention, such as the European Documentation Unit at the Department of Law, the access to the international databases through Heallink, the interlibrary loan facilities, or the “induction days” organized during the first weeks of each academic year by some libraries. The possibility of Campus wide, centralized Libraries should be discussed as a means to increase quality with fewer resources. Moreover, efforts should be made to have libraries open on weekends.

The ICT services oriented to students are widespread and cover global WIFI access through Eduroam, standard audiovisual resources for face-to-face lectures, and regular support to synchronous (videoconference) and asynchronous (eclass) resources, while the Web sites cover most information needs. Access to several administrative services by the students has already been implemented, while a major move to e-administration is planned to become effective in 2016. It should be borne in mind that ICT support at DUTH is especially challenging, due to its multi-campus, multi-department and multi-faculty nature. Therefore, special care has to be taken so that the quality of service has to be homogeneous throughout the University, although management may be centralized in order to increase efficiency. Globally, DUTH ICT services seem to be working rather well, having overcome several problems that are mainly due to the nature of DUTH and the slashed state funding. The level of adoption of ICT in the regular teaching and learning processes seems to vary a lot among professors, departments or faculties, although the overall satisfaction of the students, as shown in the questionnaires is reasonable. Also, as mentioned above, in section 4.5, more attention should be paid to the pedagogical training of the academic staff in terms of use of the ICT facilities, so that innovative pedagogical practices can be promoted through the adequate use of ICT services. Also, a major challenge for the ICT support services will be the eventual creation of the Faculty for Life Long Learning that is currently envisaged by DUTH. It is recommended that the University start a systematic series of distance learning courses, probably taking advantage of concrete existing initiatives, so that both technical and pedagogical knowledge can be created and embedded in the ICT support staff and the institution in general.

Collection of data regarding the services is being made through the general information system of MODIP, whose final version will be put in production soon in 2016. The data regarding student satisfaction and satisfaction regarding the support services mainly come from the regular questionnaires related to coursework. As the self-evaluation report acknowledges, there is a need for a wider and coordinated data collection for all services, taking advantage of the accumulated experience by the MODIP, as well as by several units (mainly departments) with respect to specific services provided by them. Based on such data collection and analysis process, it might be possible to have better evidence regarding the adoption of good practices or the quality and level of use of the provided services (e.g. regarding the newly introduced mentoring and socio-psychological counseling services). This initiative must be implemented, especially since all services should aim to achieve ISO quality certifications.

In summary, the overall services seem to be rather good, although they are not evenly distributed. Some innovations have been introduced, although there is no evidence that the data collection and analysis processes regarding these services have been implemented. This is understandable given the short time frame between the IER and the EEC visit, as well as the reduced number of administrative personnel and staff due to the severe budget cuts.

| *Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&4.6):* | Tick |
|---|---|
| **Worthy of merit** | |
| **Positive evaluation** | ✓ |
| **Partially positive evaluation** | |
| **Negative evaluation** | |

## *4.7 Information Systems for Recording and Analysing Data and Indicators*

- whether the Institution possesses reliable means for collecting, analysing and utilizing valid information in respect to key performance indicators, the profile of the student population and student progression, success and drop-out rates
- whether the Institution possesses reliable means for collecting, analysing and utilizing valid information regarding its other functions and activities
- whether the Institution collects information about student satisfaction with their programmes of study and the career paths offered to graduates
- whether the Institution seeks comparison with other similar establishments within and beyond the European Higher Education Area, with a view to developing self-awareness and finding ways to improve its operation

As already mentioned in previous sections, DUTH has established a workflow for data collection, processing and analysis, which involves both human resources and ICT infrastructure and services. Based on the available information, such workflow seems to have created a successful path and work culture. At the same time, there is a strong emphasis on promoting the ICT infrastructure and services, as the most reliable means to support these processes.

The institution has already implemented processes in order to collect information about student satisfaction regarding the individual courses, although there is no evidence for a systematic collection of data regarding the global study programs (see previous comment on local initiatives at some departments that are supported by the University). On the other hand, although DASTA is an experienced unit with several mature services and a successful website, no systematic data collection and study have been reported regarding student satisfaction regarding career paths. Taking advantage of its experience, DASTA might lead such systematic studies in cooperation with MODIP, during the studies and especially after graduation, eventually taking advantage of the Alumni Associations (see previous suggestions).

The accumulated evidence from the documentation and the visit has shown that there is a number of information systems and procedures that have been put in place in order to collect student progression data, although there is a lack of a complete set of processes regarding the use of the rest of services offered to the students as well as the corresponding student satisfaction. An integrated set of processes and systems seems to be necessary in order to support the complete lifecycle of information processing, in line with the currently established workflow and the knowledge accumulated by MODIP.

Although MODIP has been involved in the related national processes and forums, even showing some of its results, the initiatives regarding a systematic comparative analysis are rather thin, consisting in actions performed by individuals or departments. The institution should implement the actions, as envisioned in their plans, to develop a more reliable and robust analysis of strengths and weaknesses, as compared to other national and international institutions. As suggested by the MODIP, it would greatly depend on ADIP and even the European Quality Agencies to establish a common framework and data structures that would enable such systematic analysis.

MODIP has relied, up to now, on an incomplete information system. The new Web-based platform, to be put in production in 2016, supporting the QA process seems to be well designed and implemented, according to the demo and the associated documentation. Its planned use in the semester following our report should be an important tool towards a sustainable and efficient implementation of the university's QA process. However, special attention should be paid to the maintenance of such system, which may require additional funding and human resources. A coordinated action between the DUTH administration and its MODIP with those of other Greek universities and the ADIP may greatly contribute to the sustainability of the QA process and the associated information systems.

The "data warehouse" issue has appeared to be as an essential problem to overcome in the information systems associated to the QA process and the overall decision-making and implementation process. This is a well-known problem at most universities and requires a significant investment in terms of coordination of the information databases and the related applications. DUTH is aware of the weaknesses regarding the "data warehouse" (e.g. the connection of the ELKE (research funds) information system with others) and has invested some effort in solving them, although more resources should be invested.  The DUTH administration, deans, chairs, faculty and MODIP, specifically, have wrestled with revised QA guidelines and rubrics issued by ADIP to all Greek universities for self-evaluation purposes. Unfortunately, such changes have become a global reality in the evaluation of higher education today. Adapting to frequent changes in the data structures underlying the information to be collected and used in the Quality Assurance process is also required across the globe as nations seek find and apply the perfect evaluation model.  Nonetheless, such frequent changes increase not only the work load of the reduced staff dedicated to the quality assurance process but also increase the need to keep the information systems updated.  In the current climate, the efficacy of the DUTH QA process is further strained by requirements for an increased investment in human and financial resources.

Finally, metrics and data collected for the QA process should consider the inherent differences among disciplines, as pointed out e.g. by Architecture professors. This issue is well known in Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts and should be addressed by ADIP and MODIP. An action towards this direction may provide a smoother inclusion of all disciplines in the QA process and allow the University administration to take better and informed decisions.

In summary, although several current information systems have not yet entered the production phase, there is a clear commitment of DUTH and concrete actions towards a short and mid term implementation. There is still a need for more measures for collecting data, especially with respect to global studies and career paths.

| *Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&4.7):* | Tick |
|---|---|
| **Worthy of merit** | |
| **Positive evaluation** | ✓ |
| **Partially positive evaluation** | |
| **Negative evaluation** | |

## *4.8 Dissemination of information to stakeholders*

- how the Institution sees to the publication of information on the programmes offered, the expected learning outcomes, the degrees awarded, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures it uses and the learning opportunities it offers to students
- whether the information regarding the Institution’s offered programmes of study is available in English or in other languages
- whether the teaching staff’s CVs are included in the publicized information, both in Greek and in English

The university has developed and refined its website and eLearning platform already discussed that provides significant information to students.

There is a bilingual (Greek and English) handbook that summarizes all of the programs of study available at DUTH.

Efforts are planned or underway to make more programs available in English as well as Greek, just as the MBA program. The CVs of teaching staff and other program information are in the process of being prepared in both Greek and English for the website and eLearning platform.

| *Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&4.8):* | Tick |
|---|---|
| **Worthy of merit** | ✓ |
| **Positive evaluation** | |
| **Partially positive evaluation** | |
| **Negative evaluation** | |

## 4.9 Continuous monitoring and periodic review of the study programmes

- the procedure followed with regard to assessment and periodic review of the contents of study programmes
- whether this procedure takes into account the changing needs of society
- whether this procedure takes into consideration the findings emanating from monitoring the graduates' career paths
- the procedure with which the reviews take into account the students' work load, the progress rate and completion of studies
- whether this procedure takes into account the cutting edge research activities in that particular discipline
- whether the involvement of students and other stakeholders is secured in the revision of the programmes

According to the IER, the continuous monitoring and periodic reviews of the academic programs within the departments have strengthened the quality assurance culture across the University. The QA culture is evidenced by the participation of many departmental faculty and staff members throughout the process. It is reported that the process facilitated the development of better data acquisition systems, as well as the accurate and timely recording of the functioning of the institution. The report also highlighted weaknesses in the quality assurance system of the institution. In some instances, faculty involvement was not obtained and the development and implementation of certain initiatives to address needed program revisions or modifications have not been forthcoming. To a large extent, the review process led to frequent review and timely revisions of the degree programs. For example, some program faculty seem more open to revising their programs to be more flexible and modern, and to improve the time to completion or graduation for students. While some programs used the evaluation to reflect on their educational effectiveness and have made progress by analysing and integrating the current state of their discipline and students' workload, other programs/departments have not yet done so.

DUTH proposes a cyclical review of their programs every four years. This is actually a shorter period than what is used abroad and may lead to an over-analysis. In order to see curricular results it is advisable that review cycles follow at least one cohort of students, which means minimum 4+2 years. Cyclical reviews every 6 years may lead to more accurate assessment of the programs' effectiveness in meeting the students' progress, and their relevance to cutting edge research trends and the changing needs of society.

In general, the students do not participate in the internal self-evaluation process. The departmental self-evaluation teams and MODIP should aim to involve them, formally and informally, in the data analysis and further internal evaluation process. They could be also be involved in a "program exit" survey as well as course evaluations, perhaps without controversy. Taking into account the current obstacles of the attitudes towards evaluation of certain student groups, this action may greatly enhance the quality culture and make the evaluation process itself more sustainable. The interviews also revealed that the procedure has not included, for the most part, systematic monitoring the graduates' career paths or success. While isolated efforts are evident, however, DUTH should focus on developing a global strategy to stay in touch with their alumni and monitor their career path. Social and community events (on site and elsewhere) should aim at bringing alumni, faculty and students together to strengthen their sense of being part of the University's life. This could also generate significant revenue (i.e. fundraising events, scholarships etc.). A self-governed Alumni Association is important and should be involved in the University affairs through advisory committees that would keep the University closer to the community and their needs. It should be noted, of course, that the situation at DUTH regarding the aforementioned issues is endemic throughout Greek universities and is rooted in intractable, stubborn sociocultural realities that are not easily overcome or transcended.

| *Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&4.9):* | Tick |
|---|---|
| **Worthy of merit** | |
| **Positive evaluation** | ✓ |
| **Partially positive evaluation** | |
| **Negative evaluation** | |

## *4.10 Periodic external evaluation*

- the procedure already planned by the Institution in order to deal with the observations of the Institutional External evaluation
- how the anticipated implementation of plans by Departments / Faculties is monitored in response to any comments included in their external evaluation and in the accreditation of their programmes

Metrics and data collected for the Quality Assurance process should consider the inherent differences among disciplines, as pointed out by Architecture professors. This issue is well known in Social Sciences, Humanities and Arts and should be addressed by ADIP and MODIP. An action towards this direction may provide a smoother inclusion of all disciplines in the Quality Assurance process and allow the University administration to take better and informed decisions. The president of MODIP is painfully aware of such continuing challenges affecting the procedures.

The IER also noted the weaknesses of the institution in seeking to develop strategies in various areas. The IER also identified some weaknesses in the self-evaluation procedure resulting from problems external to the University. The external bureaucratic issues do present a significant obstacle to the smooth implementation of the evaluation process and inhibit the flexibility for innovation MODIP must identify and embrace. However, as previously noted, MODIP needs to find solutions to the recorded internal weaknesses; find ways to internally bypass the external obstacles in order to effectively capitalize, for example, on the potential academic and socisl benefits of DUTH's unique and rich social and physical diversity.

ADIP's changes in the data structures and the information to be collected and used in the Quality Assurance process have increase the workload of the staff involved in the implementation of this process and necessitated constant upd0ating of the information systems. While such QA rubric changes occur globally, the effectiveness of the Quality Assurance process is seriously hindered due to the challenges of the increased investment in human and financial resources.

To support the Quality Assurance process, DUTH designed and developed a new Web-based platform to facilitate the data collection and monitoring of its programs. According to the demonstration and the associated documentation, the platform seems to be well designed, and its implementation is imminent. Its use in the following semester may be an important tool towards a sustainable and efficient implementation of the Quality Assurance process. However, special attention should be paid to the maintenance of such system, which will, in all likelihood, require additional funding and human resources. A coordinated action between the DUTH administration and its MODIP with those of the rest of universities and the ADIP may contribute to the sustainability of the Quality Assurance process and the associated information systems.

| *Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&4.10):* | Tick |
|---|---|
| **Worthy of merit** | |
| **Positive evaluation** | ✓ |
| **Partially positive evaluation** | |
| **Negative evaluation** | |

## *4.11 Internal System of Quality Assurance – Conclusions and recommendations*

*Please complete the following sections regarding the **internal system of quality assurance**:*

- *Underline specific positive points*:

Overall, the internal system of quality assurance has been managed well and already has had positive results for the Institution and its systems. The process put into place has led to frequent review and timely revisions of the degree programs.

Looking into the future, DUTH proposes a cyclical review of their programs every four years. This is actually advisable as review cycles should be longer and including one cohort of students (i.e., 4+2 years). Thus, cyclical reviews every 6 years may lead to more accurate assessment of the programs effectiveness in meeting the students' progress, and their relevance to cutting edge research trends and the changing needs of society.

To support the Quality Assurance process, DUTH designed and developed an impressive Web-based platform to facilitate the data collection and monitoring of its programs.

- *Underline specific negative points*:

In general, the students do not participate in the internal self-evaluation process due to political pressures and political views against such internal and external evaluations, in general. In addition, course evaluations seem to be the responsibility of the individual instructors so compliance is an ongoing issue.

There is no evidence that graduate dissertations are published and/or presented internationally, which leads to limited research productivity of graduate students.

Several current information systems have not entered the production phase while there is still a need for more measures for collecting data, especially with respect to global studies and career paths.

Although the intent is that the academic programs and awarded degrees are monitored, checked and approved regularly there is no evidence of this objective being achieved.

Library resources and operation are negatively affected by limited funding.

- *Make your suggestions for further development of the positive points*:

The launch of the new platform in the following semester will be an important tool towards a sustainable and efficient implementation of the Quality Assurance process. Special attention the maintenance of such system is essential, and this may require additional funding and human resources.

- *Make your suggestions on needed steps for improvement:*

The departmental self-evaluation teams and MODIP should aim to involve students, formally and informally, in the data analysis and further evaluation process. Taking into account the current obstacles of the attitudes towards evaluation of certain student groups, this action may greatly enhance the quality culture and make the evaluation process itself more sustainable. For example, program-wide “exit surveys” could be developed especially for graduate students. Such program evaluations could help identify areas of weakness to address as well as areas of strength to sustain.

In accordance with the DUTH mission, a graduate culture should be fostered specifically enabling graduate dissertations to be published and/or presented internationally.  Such a culture could improve the research productivity of graduate students and faculty.

The possibility of Campus wide, centralized Libraries should be discussed as a means to increase quality with fewer resources.

# 5 OPERATION OF THE CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE INSTITUTION

## 5.1 *Central Administration Services of the Institution*

- The operation of the central administration services of the Institution

In general, the central administration services of the Institutions were found to perform efficiently. There is evidence of a constructive interface for the operation of the necessary services among and within the various university agencies. Some particular issues that emerged during EEC interviews and meetings include the following:

Student needs in terms of food, housing, transportation to/from the campuses, and medical care, are covered by the University allocating to these services a relatively high percentage of its budget. Regarding housing, although it has been initially recognised by the state as a critical need to be improved, the plan for construction of new residential colleges in four cities has been suspended due to a lack of financial support. Consequently, there are indications that the students' welfare is diminished by the corresponding reduction of allocated funds from the state. Perhaps, to help alleviate this economic issue, actions to attract sponsors and donors should be focused on and expanded.

DUTH Central Library runs nine (9) de-centralized branches due the geographical dispersion of the University's departments. In the last years the library has presented increased figures in services, despite the lack of enrichment of the collections in the libraries of the Faculties and Departments (as an effect derived from limited finances). However, and as also pointed out in the IER, the operation if the library suffers from the lack of an established institutionalized framework on the administrative services of the central library and its branches. This problem should be further discussed in the imminent restructuring of DUTH administrative operations noted in the IER.

Several strong, positive points bear emphasis regarding DUTH administrative operations. With regard to the Special Account for Research Funds (SARF), there is the willingness for adopting and certifying under the ISO 9001:2008 standard, a perspective that will ensure an objective quality management system for its operation. In fact, the EEC was later notified that the certification processes of the SARF's Quality Management System have been completed (28th December 2015) in accordance with ISO 9001:2008. Furthermore, the creation of supportive mechanisms and services, such as a technology transfer office and a patent issue supporting office, are within the short-term implementation actions of the DUTH strategic administrative plans. The above-mentioned points, among others, are indicative of the positive direction that the Special Account for Research Funds service is moving towards. The EEC is confident that the stated plans towards this direction are comprehensive and realistic. The EEC, however, would like to suggest that a more balanced provision of services is somehow distributed among the departments. It is understandable that the management of services in a university with widely dispersed campuses and facilities and agencies, is a monumental task. The Administration is to be applauded for its tenacity in addressing this task and the measures it planned or undertaken to effectuate speedier communication and processing, as well as a more responsive bureaucratic framework.

| *Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&5.1):* | Tick |
|---|---|
| **Worthy of merit** | ✓ |
| **Positive evaluation** | |
| **Partially positive evaluation** | |
| **Negative evaluation** | |

## *5.2 Operation of the Central Administration of the Institution – Conclusions and recommendations*

- *Underline specific positive points*:

The university has in place a system for managing its various university-wide operations across the four campus locations. As noted in the prior section, the administration responsible for the efficient delivery of services to the university community is cognizant of the needs and issues regarding operations such as housing, transportation and buildings for the schools. A team of dedicated administrators with a great deal of experience and knowledge related to DUTH operations lead the central administration. The success of many of the Schools can be attributed to this leadership. One of several examples of the success of leadership and allocation of funds was evident in the operation of the Teaching Hospital. Cutting edge, state of the art small clinics had been created and diagnostic tools had been purchased. The leadership structure in place augurs well for needed innovation and reform in meeting the daunting challenges facing the university in its era of financial crisis and a regulatory system in flux.

- *Underline specific negative points*:

The university's budget for operating has been slashed about 50%. Certain funds earmarked for academics and research, for example, have had to be diverted to other maintenance and repair items. Transportation and student housing issues discussed in this report need to be addressed.

- *Make your suggestions for further development of the positive points*:

The Rector should lobby to obtain funds needed to exploit the unique and important geographical region of DUTH. The Schools and Departments from Classics to Medicine, Law, Forestry, Business and Engineering, Sports Science, Education and Languages, are serving a vital purpose in preparing and positioning exemplary graduates in their respective fields.

- *Make your suggestions on needed steps for improvement*:

During the brief period of interviews, meeting and site visits to the Schools and buildings that house them, there was evidence of building operations that needed increased attention. Adequate funding is needed for building maintenance, improved buildings for certain Schools, and a close look at the student transportation and housing situation. Of course, all of the buildings need to be maintained to enhance the experience of teaching and learning.

## *6. FINAL CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS*

*In connection with the*

- general operation of the Institution
- development of the Institution to this date and its present situation
- Institution's readiness and capability to change/improve
- Internal system of Quality Assurance of the Institution

- Underline specific positive points:

Based on the review of the IER and the site visit interviews and meetings, the operation of DUTH is notable for the conscientious and tenacious diligence of the administrators and faculty in responding to challenges.

DUTH has evolved into 8 schools and 20 departments currently since its inception in 1972. DUTH has responded to the realities and changes in society in modifying and creating new programs.

DUTH is ready and capable to improve and change as necessary within the daunting financial constraints that are inhibiting a more dramatic leap into the future. The DUTH administration and MODIP leadership augur well for the future of the institution.

The comprehensive IER and the presentations of the Rector, members of MODIP, Deans, Chairs, faculty and students, leave no doubt that the internal QA processes of DUTH will further the mission and goals of DUTH to provide a world-class education for all of its students.

- Underline specific negative points:

The general operation of DUTH has been hampered by the almost 50% budget cuts. These cuts have forced the administration to defer and delay plans to improve many operations. Such operations include, for example, creation of new and better spaces for several departments, expansion and improvement of library holdings and library administration and better management of global studies opportunities. Thus, in the present financial climate there is a need for difficult decisions on centralizing services and maximizing the use of resources.

Development of new academic programs is hampered by the reduction of faculty members and severely reduced secretarial support for existing programs. The seemingly continuous state demands for internal evaluations and responses to external evaluations by University, School and departmental committees during the past several years in the context of diminished faculty and staff resources may be another deterrent to robust development. Faculty morale is understandably low.

The university has also met with regulatory resistance in its desire to offer Distance Learning Programs and other competitive programs of study.

There are issues in terms of student engagement and participation. In general, the students do not participate in the internal self-evaluation process due to political pressures and political views against such internal and external evaluations. Many students do not attend lectures as allowed by certain regulations.

There are also issues with certain faculty regarding engagement and participation. Such issues include opposition to the evaluation process and affect the quality of the University processes. Faculty are also facing daunting pressures caused by the reduction of support staff, inordinate student-faculty ratios and faculty attrition.

The complicated centralized state-driven admissions process in some cases is not aligned with the realities of the university's stated capacity for certain departments. This "disconnect" perforce strains efforts to achieve greater academic program quality and strains the operation of services for students across the university. Also, the paucity of productive participation from certain students and faculty needs to be addressed, although it seems to be a systemic problem of the country's higher education system and HEIs around the world.

- Make your suggestions for further development of the positive points:

Undoubtedly, the bottom line for the further development of efficient and efficacious operation of the University is the restoration of budget cuts to the administration. More adequate funding is needed to sustain existing programs at the levels needed. Faculty support for effective pedagogy, research and grant opportunities and attendance at local and international conferences must continue and grow. The continued faculty and secretarial attrition plaguing DUTH must be stemmed to enable expansion of programs, the provision of opportunities for rich field experiences in Greece and abroad, and the integration of dynamic career-oriented program aspects. The administration should seek further organization, operation and improvement of the data-collection and databases of DUTH and the promulgation of information and curricula in English and other languages relevant to the goal of international and global awareness for faculty and students.

- Make your suggestions on needed steps for improvement:

In addition to the recommendations noted in prior sections, it is suggested that the Rector and administrative team lobby for resources and funding to improve the infrastructure of DUTH. Housing, transportation, facilities, classrooms, partnerships with other universities, partnerships with private and public sector businesses, agencies and corporations should be strengthened and expanded. Donors and fundraising should be maximized within legal and regulatory boundaries. Advisory Board members should be recruited to help provide important professional insights into the needs of the university for improvement and change. Importantly, DUTH should be allowed to compete and have the freedom to actualize its plans in accordance with its mission to expand opportunities for all students in all departments. A center for faculty support of teaching and research/grants development as well as a center to enable the smoother administration of research grants and projects and their budgets, is in order. A change in regulations to allow for "private" paying students and acceptance of donations, and the collection of data on graduates may also help to achieve the goals set by DUTH.

Finally, the DUTH administration, in concert with all of its IECs and Senate, and led by MODIP, should continue to strive for a culture of excellence in research, teaching and graduate studies, and keep this goal at the heart of any decision making as it is truly the most important driving force in higher education today.

### *6.1 Final decision of the EEC*

| *Please decide in respect to the overall Institutional evaluation:* | Tick |
|---|---|
| **Worthy of merit** | |
| **Positive evaluation** | ✓ |
| **Partially positive evaluation** | |
| **Negative evaluation** | |

The DUTH administrative bodies have responded to the requirements of ADIP in a diligent and timely manner. The IER of the MODIP reflected the essential components of the Quality Assurance guidelines. The report was honest and clear in pointing out strengths as well as weaknesses. The content of the IER was verified as accurate during the extensive interviews, meetings and presentations, as well as through the supplementary materials provided. Given the timeline of only a few months for completing the task of evaluating, for the first time, the entire university, using a novel set of rubrics, the DUTH overall work and future promise is worthy of merit. The IER reflects the commitment of the DUTH administration and faculty to achieving the DUTH's mission and goals in an era of immense economic challenges, social unrest, and regulatory and political flux in Greece affecting Greek higher education.

There is a disagreement among EEC members regarding the basis of the overall rating. One dissenting member who finds the final rating as "Worthy of Merit" views it as a rating of "the totality of the internal evaluation process" with emphasis on the overall efficacy of the IER's procedural framework and the fidelity of the IER's procedures, findings and suggestions by MODIP vis-à-vis the week-long meetings, interviews and observations of the EEC members. The substantive issues that have been raised in the EER as still needing to be addressed do not detract from the overall rating to the extent that these issues have been identified in the IER and during meetings with MODIP and to the extent they are truly manageable in light of the current socioeconomic crisis. Another view gives equal weight to all sections of the report and bases the overall rating on the sum of percentages providing an overall evaluation of the Institution rather than focusing primarily on the evaluation of the Internal System of Quality Assurance.

**The Members of the Committee**

**DEMOCRITUS**
**UNIVERSITY OF THRACE**

Name and Surname Signature

**Prof. John Spyridakis**
St John University of New York, New York, U.S.A.

**Prof. Dionysis Bochtis**
University of Aarhus, Aarhus, Denmark

**Prof. Yiannis Dimitriadis**
Universidad de Valladolid, Valladolid, Spain

**Prof. Panagiota Klentrou**
Brock University, Ontario, Canada

**Prof. Athina Petropulu**
Rutgers University, New Jersey, U.S.A.