



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ

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ΑΡΧΗ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ
ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΣΤΗΝ ΑΝΩΤΑΤΗ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗ

HELLENIC REPUBLIC

HQA

HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE
AND ACCREDITATION AGENCY

**Accreditation Report
for the Undergraduate Study Programme
(Integrated Master) of:**

Civil Engineering

Institution: Democritus University of Thrace

Date: 23rd November 2019

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Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση
Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινωνικό Ταμείο

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



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION
FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE
IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Report of the Panel appointed by the HQA to undertake the review of the Undergraduate Study Programme (Integrated Master) of Civil Engineering of the Democritus University of Thrace for the purposes of granting accreditation

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PART A: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW

I. The Accreditation Panel

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the Undergraduate Study Programme (Integrated Master) of Civil Engineering of the Democritus University of Thrace comprised the following four (4) members, drawn from the HQA Register, in accordance with the Law 4009/2011:

1. Professor Michail Kagioglou (Chair)
University of Huddersfield, UK

2. Professor Costas Georgopoulos,
Kingston University, UK

3. Dr. Maria Diakoumi
University of Brighton, UK

4. Mr. Vasilios Asimidis
Representative member of the Technical Chamber of Greece

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

The overall accreditation process took place between the 17 and 23 November 2019 in Greece. The Accreditation Panel was communicated all relevant submitted information from HQA, including relevant guidance from HQA and the Institution. The panel arrived in Greece on the Sunday 17/11 and some members attended the HQA induction visit in Athens on the 18th. The whole panel were present in Xanthi on the 18th and site visits took place between the 18th and 19th of November. Specific meetings that took place, included:

- Meeting with the Deputy Rector and President of MODIP and the Head of Department: introduction to the institution, the department and highlighted areas of the submission report
- Meeting with OMEA and MODIP representatives: Specific questions asked around the ten principles under examination. Additional information in relation to progress made between the previous evaluation to date, students work, samples of dissertations, etc.
- Meeting with Teaching Staff: Specific queries in relation to programme study design, performance and research performance and how it is embedded in teaching, etc.
- Meeting with Students: examining their experience, inclusion in programme design, workload and ability to complete studies, consistency of experience and overall satisfaction.
- Meetings with Graduates: examining the experience whilst at the University and how they benefited.
- Meeting with Employers and social partners and stakeholders: examining the contribution and impact to the wider social structure and value of the institution in its wider context.
- Visiting classrooms, lecture halls, libraries and other facilities, including labs: including old and new facilities.
- Final meeting with OMEA and MODIP representatives: communicating initial views and providing an opportunity to respond to final queries.

The panel members convened in Athens and worked from 21 to 23 November to complete the draft report, which was then forwarded to HQA. The panel worked well together and the decisions in this report were unanimous.

III. Study Programme Profile

The Democritus University of Thrace with almost 29000 students and 700 academic staff, now, was established in 1973 and the Department of Civil Engineering was one of the first that started operating in 1974. The Department now has a total number of 1488 students in years one to five of which 1235 are considered as active students with 683 formally enrolled in years one to five. The department has 37 academic staff with a Student / Staff Ratio of 40.2 (out of 1488), 33.4 (out of 1235), and 18.5 (out of 683). It is one of five Departments, including Electrical & Computer Engineering, Environmental Engineering, Architectural Engineering and Production & Management Engineering.

Academic remit is founded on offering a degree that satisfies the competences of a Civil Engineer as described in detail in the Government's Regulation published in 2018 (FEK187/5-11-2018). This gives graduates the necessary academic qualifications to allow them to become professionally qualified by the Technical Chamber of Greece (TEE). The duration of studies is typically-in-Greece five years. The programme includes all competences such as Basic Scientific Base (Maths, Physics, Chemistry, etc.) in the first year and then core subject Threads over the next four years including a Final Year Project in the final semester following the Integrated Master (MEng) philosophy and structures. Threads include Buildings and Infrastructure (Materials, Structural Analysis and Design, etc.), Seismic Design (Dynamic Analysis and Design to latest Eurocodes), Hydraulic & Water Engineering (Water Supply and Management, Waste Water and Environmental Engineering, etc.), Geotechnical Engineering (Geology, Soil Investigation Reports, Foundations, Pavements, etc.), Transportation Engineering (Surveying and Road Design, Traffic Management, etc.) and Project & Construction Management (Construction Procurement, Quality Management, Risk Management, etc.). The choice of teaching subjects (147 in total with 68 core and the rest options) gives the students many opportunities to develop and enhance competences that are wide and deep in most of the vast majority of professional competences.

The department is fully supported by the local community, which provides many opportunities for generous work practice and further employment. The campus offers to students ample facilities for teaching, learning and research in state-of-the-art laboratories, lecture theatres and associated support services. The laboratories cover all main subjects such as Reinforced Concrete and E/Q-qualified Structures that includes a large seismic table; Construction Materials with all relevant equipment such as an Environmental Chamber; Hydraulics and Water Engineering with large flumes; Geotechnical and Geology Engineering with latest test equipment.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

Principle 1: Academic Unit Policy for Quality Assurance

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD APPLY A QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY AS PART OF THEIR STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT. THIS POLICY SHOULD EXPAND AND BE AIMED (WITH THE COLLABORATION OF EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS) AT ALL INSTITUTION'S AREAS OF ACTIVITY, AND PARTICULARLY AT THE FULFILMENT OF QUALITY REQUIREMENTS OF UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES. THIS POLICY SHOULD BE PUBLISHED AND IMPLEMENTED BY ALL STAKEHOLDERS.

The quality assurance policy of the academic unit is in line with the Institutional policy on quality, and is included in a published statement that is implemented by all stakeholders. It focuses on the achievement of special objectives related to the quality assurance of study programmes offered by the academic unit.

The quality policy statement of the academic unit includes its commitment to implement a quality policy that will promote the academic profile and orientation of the programme, its purpose and field of study; it will realize the programme's strategic goals and it will determine the means and ways for attaining them; it will implement the appropriate quality procedures, aiming at the programme's continuous improvement.

In particular, in order to carry out this policy, the academic unit commits itself to put into practice quality procedures that will demonstrate:

- a) the suitability of the structure and organization of the curriculum;*
- b) the pursuit of learning outcomes and qualifications in accordance with the European and the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education;*
- c) the promotion of the quality and effectiveness of teaching;*
- d) the appropriateness of the qualifications of the teaching staff;*
- e) the enhancement of the quality and quantity of the research output among faculty members of the academic unit;*
- f) ways for linking teaching and research;*
- g) the level of demand for qualifications acquired by graduates, in the labour market;*
- h) the quality of support services such as the administrative services, the Library, and the student welfare office;*
- i) the conduct of an annual review and an internal audit of the quality assurance system of the undergraduate programme(s) offered, as well as the collaboration of the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG) with the Institution's Quality Assurance Unit (QAU).*

Study Programme compliance

The panel was provided with detailed presentations and documentations that demonstrate the level to which institutional policy is communicated at the level of the faculty and individual departments and specific programme levels. In particular, it was clear that MODIP plays the role of communicating University policy and the departments are responsible for their implementation. The panel was provided with evidence of how this manifested at the operational level. As such the programme fulfilled the quality requirements set by MODIP in relation to course structure, number of lessons delivered, the number and nature of assessments set as well as the overall delivery method. It was also clear that the qualifications of teaching staff were appropriate (even though these are pre-determined to a certain degree

by the availability of posts at a national level). The panel saw evidence of the level of research taking place and how this is incorporated in the teaching practices and experimentation. The programme offers a wide range of options for different specializations and career routes with a number of core elements and a large number of optional modules.

The support services are appropriate, albeit the number of support personnel has diminished over the last few years through budgetary cuts. There was clear evidence of strong participation of external stakeholders in the educational experience of students as well as their recruitment when they graduate.

The panel identified two areas for potential improvements. The first has to do with the students being participants in the co-design of the programme and the second with the setting of Key Performance Indicators (KPI) in relation to the department, programme evaluation and how this is tracked at a departmental and institutional level. For example, the panel was not provided with a detailed tracking list of the 15 recommendations from the 2013 evaluation visit. This is not to say that there has not been any progress.

Panel judgement

Please tick one of the following:

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

Panel Recommendations

- The panel recommends that a joint staff and student committee be set up that meets on a quarterly basis that examines the course structure, workload for students, assessments methods, practical experience, etc. which is used for the explicit purpose of enhancing the curriculum and programme structure. The meeting should look at programme data in relation to assessment and feedback, student satisfaction, practical experience, workload for students, etc. and establish a method by which progress from one meeting to the next is tracked and evaluated.
- The panel recommends that the University establish a specific joint group between MODIP and OMEA that sets clear KPIs in relation to the previous (2013) and the current evaluation recommendations and tracks progress against it in the short, medium and long term, with clear meeting minutes. The panel recommends that progress against this recommendation is clearly included in the progress report submitted to ADIP two years after this report.

Principle 2: Design and Approval of Programmes

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD DEVELOP THEIR UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES FOLLOWING A DEFINED WRITTEN PROCESS, WHICH WILL INVOLVE THE PARTICIPANTS, INFORMATION SOURCES AND THE APPROVAL COMMITTEES FOR THE PROGRAMME. THE OBJECTIVES, THE EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES, THE INTENDED PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND THE WAYS TO ACHIEVE THEM ARE SET OUT IN THE PROGRAMME DESIGN. THE ABOVE DETAILS AS WELL AS INFORMATION ON THE PROGRAMME'S STRUCTURE ARE PUBLISHED IN THE STUDENT GUIDE.

Academic units develop their programmes following a well-defined procedure. The academic profile and orientation of the programme, the objectives, the subject areas, the structure and organization, the expected learning outcomes and the intended professional qualifications according to the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education are described at this stage. The approval or revision process for programmes includes a check of compliance with the basic requirements described in the Standards, on behalf of the Institution's Quality Assurance Unit (QAU).

Furthermore, the programme design should take into consideration the following:

- *the Institutional strategy*
- *the active participation of students*
- *the experience of external stakeholders from the labour market*
- *the smooth progression of students throughout the stages of the programme*
- *the anticipated student workload according to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System*
- *the option to provide work experience to the students*
- *the linking of teaching and research*
- *the relevant regulatory framework and the official procedure for the approval of the programme by the Institution.*

Study Programme compliance

The programme design follows the institutional strategy. This is evident from the regular informative meetings organized by MODIP for Heads of Department and representatives of OMEA (9/11/2019, 28/5/2019, 29/5/2019, 5/6/2019, 20/6/2019). MODIP provides all necessary Standards and Regulations for internal assessment of quality and documents / questionnaires for verification.

There was not clear evidence of student or external stakeholder participation in the design of the programme although there is student and external stakeholder committees for that effect.

The progression is not very smooth as it allows modules to be trailed for many years and there are not any prerequisites. For example, a student could undertake an advanced module in Structures without having to pass an introductory / basic module in Structures.

The programme is designed in accordance with ECTS however the strict implementation results in a heavy student workload that does not allow for reflection and independent student learning.

There is clear evidence of student work placements (60 students per year) which provide the opportunity to work in the industry with financial support. Often this enhances their employability.

Teaching is clearly research-informed especially in the final years of the programme. This is evident from the final year projects in addition to lab-based modules a sample of which the team had the opportunity to examine during their visit.

The design of the programme takes into consideration the Institution’s regulatory framework and the official procedure of the programme although the later could be enhanced to include effective monitoring.

Panel judgement

Principle 2: Design and Approval of Programmes	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

The Accreditation Panel agrees that this Programme leads to a Level 7 Qualification according to the National & European Qualifications Network (Integrated Master)	YES	NO*
	X	

**In case of negative judgement, please justify*

Panel Recommendations

- The committee of external stakeholders should include a greater number of Industrial experts and at least one member of the Technical Chamber of Greece (TEE) who can provide valuable feedback on the design, review and revision of the programmes of study.
- The students should actively participate in the design of the programmes of study as recommended in Principle 1.
- To ensure the smooth progression of students throughout the stages of the programme of study, a number of prerequisite modules should be determined for “chain” modules (i.e. Structures)
- The student workload should be revised in order to avoid potential overlap between different modules (for example by merging different modules), ensure consistency with the anticipated workload in other European Universities and allow more time for reflection and independent study.

Principle 3: Student- centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD ENSURE THAT THE UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES ARE DELIVERED IN A WAY THAT ENCOURAGES STUDENTS TO TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN CREATING THE LEARNING PROCESS. THE ASSESSMENT METHODS SHOULD REFLECT THIS APPROACH.

Student-centred learning and teaching plays an important role in stimulating students' motivation, self-reflection and engagement in the learning process. The above entail continuous consideration of the programme's delivery and the assessment of the related outcomes.

The student-centred learning and teaching process

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

In addition :

- *the academic staff are familiar with the existing examination system and methods and are supported in developing their own skills in this field;*
- *the assessment criteria and methods are published in advance;*
- *the assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary is linked to advice on the learning process;*
- *student assessment is conducted by more than one examiner, where possible;*
- *the regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances;*
- *assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures;*
- *a formal procedure for student appeals is in place.*

Study Programme compliance

The delivery and assessment of the programme respects the diversity of students and their needs to a large degree. An example is the specific assessment methods for disabled students and student choice of assessments for various modules. Flexible learning paths are offered in a large variety of optional modules in the final years of the specializations. The programme uses various modes of delivery. For example, the interactive lab classes and project-based teaching (students undertake 28 projects over 5 years). Perhaps more laboratory classes could be included within the first two years of study.

There is clear evidence of a variety of pedagogical methods however it all depends on the individual academic who also evaluates and adjusts his/her delivery aiming at improvement i.e. there is no form of moderation.

Student surveys are implemented however, the number of responses is very small to conclude in any meaningful actions.

Student's sense of autonomy is reinforced especially in the final two years where students undertake project-based work and dissertations. Adequate guidance and support is provided by the teaching staff. This was verified by student feedback received during the accreditation visit.

There was clear evidence from the discussions with teaching staff and students that the environment promotes mutual respect in the student-staff relationship.

There is clear evidence of a procedure to deal with student complaints and appeals. The open door policy and the good relationship between students and staff supports an early resolution of many student issues.

Academics are supported in developing their teaching and assessment methods by the Centre of Teaching Support of the University

From student feedback, the assessment criteria and methods are made available orally in advance however they should be included in the module descriptors online.

From discussions with students, feedback is generally offered and is very useful. A formal procedure to ensure that feedback is provided for all assessments is recommended.

There was no clear evidence that the assessments were moderated by the team. There is no formal moderation procedure especially for assessments provided by a single examiner such as examining a sample by a second examiner internally.

Regulations for mitigating circumstances were not evident and decisions are largely based on individual judgments. A formal procedure for appeals is in place.

Panel judgement

Principle 3: Student- centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- The Institution should develop a well-defined procedure for ensuring that a wide range of pedagogical methods and modes of delivery are adopted throughout the programme of study and that these are regularly evaluated and adjusted as required.
- The department should keep encouraging the increase in participation in student surveys and seek additional means of receiving valuable student feedback on the quality and effectiveness of teaching such as regular liaison meetings with a dedicated student/staff committee.
- The department should ensure that the assessment methods and criteria are included in the module descriptors and are available online in advance.
- The department should develop a formal process for providing oral and written feedback to students.
- A formal internal moderation procedure should be defined to ensure consistency and fairness of assessment and marking across the programme of study.
- The regulations for assessment should take into account mitigating circumstances.

Principle 4: Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD DEVELOP AND APPLY PUBLISHED REGULATIONS COVERING ALL ASPECTS AND PHASES OF STUDIES (ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, RECOGNITION AND CERTIFICATION).

Institutions and academic units need to put in place both processes and tools to collect, manage and act on information regarding student progression.

Procedures concerning the award and recognition of higher education degrees, the duration of studies, rules ensuring students progression, terms and conditions for student mobility should be based on the institutional study regulations. Appropriate recognition procedures rely on institutional practice for recognition of credits among various European academic departments and Institutions, in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

Graduation represents the culmination of the students' study period. Students need to receive documentation explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed (Diploma Supplement).

Study Programme compliance

Student progression is fully supported by detailed data that is collected and managed by the Department.

The Department fully complies with the following:

- Procedures for the award and recognition of higher education degrees
- Duration of studies
- Rules ensuring student progression
- Terms and conditions of student mobility
- Institutional practice for credit recognition

Students receive all documentation with their degrees including qualifications gained, learning outcomes achieve and further details of their studies

Panel judgement

Principle 4: Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

Principle 5: Teaching Staff

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD ASSURE THEMSELVES OF THE QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCE OF THE TEACHING STAFF. THEY SHOULD APPLY FAIR AND TRANSPARENT PROCESSES FOR THE RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE TEACHING STAFF.

The Institutions and their academic units have a major responsibility as to the standard of their teaching staff providing them with a supportive environment that promotes the advancement of their scientific work. In particular, the academic unit should:

- *set up and follow clear, transparent and fair processes for the recruitment of properly qualified staff and offer them conditions of employment that recognize the importance of teaching and research;*
- *offer opportunities and promote the professional development of the teaching staff;*
- *encourage scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research;*
- *encourage innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies;*
- *promote the increase of the volume and quality of the research output within the academic unit;*
- *follow quality assurance processes for all staff members (with respect to attendance requirements, performance, self-assessment, training etc.);*
- *develop policies to attract highly qualified academic staff.*

Study Programme compliance

There is clear evidence that conditions of employment recognize the importance of teaching and research. Staff work in lab-based groups in their specialized area of research and professional practice. The University and the Department offer sufficient opportunities for professional development and strengthen the link between education and research e.g. Teaching and Learning seminars, conferences, CPD training, etc. The Centre of Teaching Support promotes innovations in teaching methods and sharing good practice. The University investment in state-of-the-art facilities and teaching resources facilitates the use of new technologies. The University investment of excellent laboratories promotes the increase of the volume and quality of research output. The Department organizes many research events in support of this too.

Attendance is at a minimum of 20 hours per week as evidenced from staff feedback. A formal procedure of evaluation of performance, self –assessment and delivery such as yearly appraisals leading to potential upgrading was not evident as it is normal for this process to be undertaken during the progression from one grade to the next.

The culture of nurturing their own researchers to become well qualified academics and remain at the University is highly commended. However there is not any evidence of clear formal policies to attract qualified academic staff from elsewhere.

Panel judgement

Principle 5: Teaching Staff	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- The Institution should develop a formal procedure to evaluate the performance and support the professional development of members of staff on a regular basis (i.e. annual appraisals).
- The department should develop a clear strategy of attracting high qualified staff from elsewhere.

Principle 6: Learning Resources and Student Support

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD HAVE ADEQUATE FUNDING TO COVER TEACHING AND LEARNING NEEDS. THEY SHOULD –ON THE ONE HAND- PROVIDE SATISFACTORY INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES FOR LEARNING AND STUDENT SUPPORT AND–ON THE OTHER HAND- FACILITATE DIRECT ACCESS TO THEM BY ESTABLISHING INTERNAL RULES TO THIS END (E.G. LECTURE ROOMS, LABORATORIES, LIBRARIES, NETWORKS, BOARDING, CAREER AND SOCIAL POLICY SERVICES ETC.).

Institutions and their academic units must have sufficient funding and means to support learning and academic activity in general, so that they can offer to students the best possible level of studies. The above means could include facilities such as libraries, study rooms, educational and scientific equipment, information and communications services, support or counselling services.

When allocating the available resources, the needs of all students must be taken into consideration (e.g. whether they are full-time or part-time students, employed or international students, students with disabilities) and the shift towards student-centred learning and the adoption of flexible modes of learning and teaching. Support activities and facilities may be organised in various ways, depending on the institutional context. However, the internal quality assurance ensures that all resources are appropriate, adequate, and accessible, and that students are informed about the services available to them.

In delivering support services the role of support and administrative staff is crucial and therefore they need to be qualified and have opportunities to develop their competences.

Study Programme compliance

- The University has heavily invested in state-of-the-art facilities such as spacious social places for students, new lecture theatres, well-equipped computer rooms, laboratory facilities with advanced equipment all located in a vast site in close proximity to town that encourages full interaction with the public.
- Information and communication services, support and counseling services are provided by the University.
- Flexible modes of learning and teaching are considered in allocating resources such as lecture theatres offering translations for international students and access for disabled students. Students are informed of the available resources via the detailed well-presented student handbook.

Panel judgement

Principle 6: Learning Resources and Student Support	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

To complement the excellent lab facilities, the panel would encourage the department to continuously pursue significant research grants that would ensure the future sustainability and enhancement of the technical and physical infrastructure.

Principle 7: Information Management

INSTITUTIONS BEAR FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR COLLECTING, ANALYSING AND USING INFORMATION, AIMED AT THE EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT OF UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES OF STUDY AND RELATED ACTIVITIES, IN AN INTEGRATED, EFFECTIVE AND EASILY ACCESSIBLE WAY.

Institutions are expected to establish and operate an information system for the management and monitoring of data concerning students, teaching staff, course structure and organization, teaching and provision of services to students as well as to the academic community.

Reliable data is essential for accurate information and for decision-making, as well as for identifying areas of smooth operation and areas for improvement. Effective procedures for collecting and analyzing information on study programmes and other activities feed data into the internal system of quality assurance.

The information gathered depends, to some extent, on the type and mission of the Institution. The following are of interest:

- *key performance indicators*
- *student population profile*
- *student progression, success and drop-out rates*
- *student satisfaction with their programme(s)*
- *availability of learning resources and student support*
- *career paths of graduates*

A number of methods may be used for collecting information. It is important that students and staff are involved in providing and analyzing information and planning follow-up activities.

Study Programme compliance

The Civil Engineering Department (CED) of Democritus University of Thrace (DUTH) has a sound and integrated procedure that has been established for the collection of data concerning the undergraduate study programme and related activities, such as the students, the teaching methods, the progression of the students and furthermore the employability and the career paths of the graduates. Database is being prepared and is about to be completed for some past years. Moreover, for years 2012 and 2013 special employability survey has been conducted for the graduates of all Departments of the University. Both at University and Department level there is a significant effort to create contact with as many alumni as possible in order to strengthen the ties among students, faculty and graduates, to report useful feedback for the programme and for the information dissemination of internship goals.

The CED is seamlessly integrated with the e-class information system managed and operated by the computerized information system of DUTH. In addition, there is an electronically supported online system for receiving questionnaires filled by students.

It seems that the system fully supports data collection and analysis of educational delivery. Student satisfaction surveys are regularly and systematically conducted at a University level using an electronically supported online QA/QC system. The operating QA/QC system is

embraced by the faculty and the students. However, this e-system is rather new and, as it was expected, the online questionnaires are filled by a rather small amount of students. Further, it definitely needs more time to fully implement the outcomes of the procedures as a decision support tool. The panel did not find evidence of a mechanism that captures staff satisfaction. A rather thorough presentation of the data collected and analysed by the system was offered to the Panel by MODIP/OMEA. Data collection results are properly visualized and presented in detail by graphs demonstrating trends and helpful comparisons took place.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The panel would encourage the University to persist in their efforts to fully optimize the data capture methods so that they can be used for effective decision efforts.
- The CED and the DUTH has made significant efforts to connect with their alumni. These efforts should be intensified by DUTH since a valuable resource for informed feedback and important ally in promoting quality assurance can be provided by alumni.
- As mentioned previously, the University should incentivize students to participate in completing the questionnaires in order to produce statistically significant performance indicators across all classes. New methods of engaging students should be established.

Principle 8: Public Information

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD PUBLISH INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR TEACHING AND ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES WHICH IS CLEAR, ACCURATE, OBJECTIVE, UP-TO-DATE AND READILY ACCESSIBLE.

Information on Institution's activities is useful for prospective and current students, graduates, other stakeholders and the public.

Therefore, institutions and their academic units provide information about their activities, including the programmes they offer, the intended learning outcomes, the qualifications awarded, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, the pass rates and the learning opportunities available to their students, as well as graduate employment information.

Study Programme compliance

The website <https://civil.duth.gr/> provides all necessary information concerning the CED in both Greek and English. The "Department", the "Faculty", the "Staff", the "Undergraduate" and the "Postgraduate" courses are the main domains of the well-structured website. Many details of the academic unit and the study programme can be traced or downloaded online in an integrated, effective and easily accessible manner. All teaching staff's CVs are available online, but they are not all consistent in their format and completeness.

All course outlines of the whole programme and the Policy for Quality Assurance along with evaluation reports and many other critical documents (rules and regulations) are available online and publicly giving a clear sign of the strive of the CED for transparency. In addition, e-class is open for the students and presents helpful information about the courses. Teaching staff upload all needed information concerning lessons, exercises, announcements and other required information.

All published information along with many useful links, activities, services to students, newsletters and daily announcements from the secretary and the academic staff for the students and the staff are updated and provided in a clear and easily accessible manner.

Panel judgement

Principle 8: Public Information	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- The staff is urged to continue their good work, to widen the use of e-class and upload lectures online.
- Several teaching staff's CVs include the published articles. However, it is strongly recommended that academic staff further promote the research activities and published work in an open-access manner.
- The panel will encourage the inclusion of professional practice information to inform and guide the students in a potential career as a civil engineer prior to them joining the programme.

Principle 9: On-going Monitoring and Periodic Internal Review of Programmes

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD HAVE IN PLACE AN INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM FOR THE AUDIT AND ANNUAL INTERNAL REVIEW OF THEIR PROGRAMMES, SO AS TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVES SET FOR THEM, THROUGH MONITORING AND AMENDMENTS, WITH A VIEW TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT. ANY ACTIONS TAKEN IN THE ABOVE CONTEXT SHOULD BE COMMUNICATED TO ALL PARTIES CONCERNED.

Regular monitoring, review and revision of study programmes aim to maintain the level of educational provision and to create a supportive and effective learning environment for students.

The above comprise the evaluation of:

- *the content of the programme in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up to date;*
- *the changing needs of society;*
- *the students' workload, progression and completion;*
- *the effectiveness of the procedures for the assessment of students;*
- *the students' expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme;*
- *the learning environment, support services and their fitness for purpose for the programme*

Programmes are reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders. The information collected is analysed and the programme is adapted to ensure that it is up-to-date. Revised programme specifications are published.

Study Programme compliance

The programme is up-to-date with current research in the subject area with references in student dissertations mainly based on the University's research. It also takes into account the changing needs of society for example the hydraulics and water engineering group changed their research to include current issues such as flood hazard, river pollution, etc. with the target to develop a Centre of Excellence in the Balcan Region.

The Regulatory Framework does not effectively support the evaluation of students' workload that was considered very heavy by the students. Evidence suggests that only 50% of students attend the formal scheduled teaching sessions and only 50% of those undertaking the assessment progress to the next level. The 50% progression suggests that the assessment procedure is not systematically monitored and improved to support students. The close relationship of students with academics helps in evaluating the students' expectations and needs.

The evaluation of the learning environment, support services and their fitness for purpose for the programme is carried out on a yearly basis however is hindered with red tape. Programme specifications that map the Professional Body requirements and benchmarks (FEK) with the programme learning outcomes that are further materialized with module learning outcomes are not available.

Panel judgement

Principle 9: On-going Monitoring and Periodic Internal Review of Programmes	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- Encourage students to explore a wider range of references globally when completing their dissertations.
- It is recommended that the progression and attainment of students, including methods of assessment and feedback are monitored periodically and meaningfully reviewed on a yearly basis including the production and tracking of an action plan.
- It is highly recommended that mapping is carried out to relate the Civil Engineer's competences (FEK) with the programme learning outcomes. This would lead to the informed selection of modules in order to reduce their number (147).

Principle 10: Regular External Evaluation of Undergraduate Programmes

PROGRAMMES SHOULD REGULARLY UNDERGO EVALUATION BY COMMITTEES OF EXTERNAL EXPERTS SET BY HQA, AIMING AT ACCREDITATION. THE TERM OF VALIDITY OF THE ACCREDITATION IS DETERMINED BY HQA.

HQA is responsible for administrating the programme accreditation process which is realised as an external evaluation procedure, and implemented by a committee of independent experts. HQA grants accreditation of programmes, with a specific term of validity, following to which revision is required. The accreditation of the quality of the programmes acts as a means of verification of the compliance of the programme with the template's requirements, and as a catalyst for improvement, while opening new perspectives towards the international standing of the awarded degrees.

Both academic units and institutions participate in the regular external quality assurance process, while respecting the requirements of the legislative framework in which they operate.

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

Study Programme compliance

The significance of the accreditation exercise and its importance for the programme and the University staff was palpable. This was demonstrated by the commitment across the University in the participation of staff and students and external stakeholders, as well as the amount of effort and collegiality afforded to the panel.

There was clear evidence of progress since the previous evaluation visit in 2013. Professor Kagioglou was a panel member of the previous panel. There has been significant progress and there was evidence of considering every aspect of the 15 recommendations, although some of the actions have not reached a conclusion and there are a number of items that are still outstanding. This demonstrates the approach to building on the previous evaluation and the KPI setting and progress made process. What was lacking in comparison was the clear indication of a structured approach by which the progress made is considered as a consolidated exercise. This means that specific elements of the evaluation have been considered by the various committees for student satisfaction, programme structure, etc. but not as a whole.

Panel judgement

Principle 10: Regular External Evaluation of Undergraduate Programmes	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

As stated in Principle 1, the panel recommends that the University establishes a specific joint group between MODIP and OMEA that sets clear KPIs in relation to the previous (2013) and the current evaluation's recommendations and tracks progress against them in the short, medium and long term, with clear meeting minutes. The panel recommends that progress against this recommendation is clearly included in the progress report submitted to ADIP two years after this report.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

- There was clear evidence of the institutional and the departmental commitment to improving the programme, the experience and the well-being of students including their employability prospects.
- The university, the department, the internal and external stakeholders were passionate and expressed their views freely and openly in relation to the evaluation exercise and engaged fully with the process.
- There was clear evidence of the commitment of staff through their availability to students at all times.
- The university is at the heart of the local community and the industry. There is a strong commitment and collaboration between the university and its alumni towards the betterment of the local and regional economy.
- There was clear evidence of a comprehensive curriculum that provides students with the opportunities to explore and determine a specific professional career, evidenced by the broad nature of core and optional modules.
- The infrastructure including learning and teaching spaces and laboratory facilities are considered some of the best of the country.

II. Areas of Weakness

In addition to a number of good points, the panel has identified some areas that require future improvement.

- In some cases there was lack of accountability between MODIP and OMEA.
- Heavy student workload which limits the opportunities for reflection and independent study.
- Lack of formalized processes for moderation, assessment and marking, student feedback, mitigating circumstances that it's over and above academic freedom.
- Heavy reliance on very senior members of staff without sufficient pipeline for succession planning.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

The panel has considered all ten principles of the quality assurance process and the main recommendations for follow up actions included:

1. The panel recommends that the University establish a specific joint group between MODIP and OMEA that sets clear KPIs in relation to the previous (2013) and the current evaluation recommendations and tracks progress against it in the short, medium and long term, with

- clear meeting minutes. The panel recommends that progress against this recommendation is clearly included in the progress report submitted to ADIP two years after this report.
2. The Institution should develop a well-defined procedure for ensuring that a wide range of pedagogical methods and modes of delivery are adopted throughout the programme of study and that these are regularly evaluated and adjusted as required. The department should ensure that the assessment methods and criteria are included in the module descriptors and are available online in advance. The department should develop a formal process for providing oral and written feedback to students. A formal internal moderation procedure should be defined to ensure consistency and fairness of assessment and marking across the programme of study. The regulations for assessment should take into account mitigating circumstances.
 3. The Institution should develop a formal procedure to evaluate the performance and support the professional development of members of staff on a regular basis (i.e. annual appraisals).
 4. The department should develop a clear strategy of attracting high qualified staff from elsewhere.
 5. The staff is urged to continue their good work, to widen the use of e-class and upload lectures online.
 6. Several teaching staff's CVs include the published articles. However, it is strongly recommended that academic staff further promote the research activities and published work in an open-access manner.
 7. The panel recommends that a joint staff and student committee is set up that meets on a quarterly basis that examines the course structure, workload for students, assessments methods, practical experience, etc. which is used for the explicit purpose of enhancing the curriculum and programme structure. The meeting should look at programme data in relation to assessment and feedback, student satisfaction, practical experience, workload for students, etc. and establish a method by which progress from one meeting to the next is tracked and evaluated. It is recommended that the progression and attainment of students, including methods of assessment and feedback are monitored periodically and meaningfully reviewed on a yearly basis including the production and tracking of an action plan.
 8. The student workload should be revised in order to avoid potential overlap between different modules (for example by merging different modules), ensure consistency with the anticipated workload in other European Universities and allow more time for reflection and independent study. It is highly recommended that mapping is carried out to relate the Civil Engineer's competences (FEK) with the programme learning outcomes. This would lead to the informed selection of modules in order to reduce their number (147).
 9. The committee of external stakeholders should include a greater number of Industrial experts and at least one member of the Technical Chamber of Greece (TEE) who can provide valuable feedback on the design, review and revision of the programmes of study. The CED and the DUTH has made significant efforts to connect with their alumni. These efforts should be intensified by DUTH since a valuable resource for informed feedback and important ally in promoting quality assurance can be provided by alumni.
 10. To ensure the smooth progression of students throughout the stages of the programme of study, a number of prerequisite modules should be determined for "chain" modules (i.e. Structures).

11. To complement the excellent lab facilities, the panel would encourage the department to continuously pursue significant research grants that would ensure the future sustainability and enhancement of the technical and physical infrastructure.
12. The panel will encourage the inclusion of professional practice information to inform and guide the students in a potential career as a civil engineer prior to them joining the programme.
13. Encourage students to explore a wider range of references globally when completing their dissertations.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are:

3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are:

1, 2, 9, 10

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are:

None

The Principles where failure of compliance was identified are:

None

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

The Accreditation Panel agrees that this Programme leads to a Level 7 Qualification according to the National & European Qualifications Network (Integrated Master)	YES	NO
	X	

**The members of the Accreditation Panel for the Undergraduate Programme
(Integrated Master) Civil Engineering
Democritus University of Thrace**

Name and Surname

Signature

- **Prof. Michail Kagioglou (Chair)**, University of Huddersfield, Huddersfield, UK
- **Prof. Costas Georgopoulos**, Kingston University London, London, UK
- **Dr Maria Diakoumi**, University of Brighton, Brighton, UK
- **Mr Vasilios Asimidis**, representative member of the Technical Chamber of Greece