Accreditation Report

for the New Undergraduate Study Programme in operation of:

Political Science

Institution: Democritus University of Thrace

Date: 28 January 2023

Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the New Undergraduate Study Programme in operation of **Political Science** 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 External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the new undergraduate study programme in operation of **Political Science** of the **Democritus University of Thrace** comprised the following four (4) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

1. **Professor Dimitrios Triantafyllou (Chair)**
   Kadir Has University, Istanbul, Turkey

2. **Professor Symeon Giannakos**
   Salve Regina University, Newport, Rhode Island, USA

3. **Professor Emeritus Joseph Joseph**
   University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus

4. **Ms. Athina Tsironi, Student**
   Department of Political Science, University of Crete, Rethymno, Greece

II.   Review Procedure and Documentation

In reviewing the Undergraduate Study Programme of Political Science (hereafter the "Programme") of the Democritus University of Thrace (hereafter "DUTH"), the objectives of the Panel, as described in the Guidelines for the Members of the External Evaluation and Accreditation Panel (EEAP), are:

- to establish whether the data provided from the various resources is consistent among one another and reflect the actual situation
- identify strengths and areas of weakness
- engage in a constructive dialogue with the Institution, leading to reflection and continuous enhancement of the Study Programme.

Prior to their visit in Komotini, the members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel (EEAP) had the opportunity to study all accreditation support materials supplied to them by HAHE in advance, including:
- HAHE Materials such as P12B_Guidelines for EEAPanel, P13B_MAPPING GRID & ASSESSMENT GUIDE, European Qualifications Framework, P1B Standards New UGP in operation EN
- Political Science DUTH Material, and
- the Department's Proposal for Accreditation along with several annexes.

Before travelling to Komotini the EEAP members had the opportunity to attend an online orientation meeting with HAHE's General Director, Dr Christina Besta. Dr Besta explained the accreditation process and provided pertinent information on HAHE's mission, on the guidelines of the Quality Assurance process, and the role and tasks of the EEAP members.

The Panel visited the Department of Political Science (hereafter the "Department") on two consecutive days, 23-24 January 2023, and worked on preparing its Accreditation Report (hereafter the "Report") between 25-28 January 2023. Professors Triantaphyllou and Gianakos were physically present in all meetings, while Professor Joseph and Ms. Tsironi participated remotely via the ZOOM platform.

Following a well-prepared schedule provided by HAHE, the Panel held several separate interactive meetings during the two-day on-site visit as follows:

On **Monday, 23 January**, the following meetings took place:
- with Professor Maria Grigoriou, Vice-Rector/MODIP President and Professor Ioannis Bekas, Chair of the Department of Political Science
- with OMEA and MODIP members and staff
- with teaching staff members.

On **Tuesday, 24 January**, the following meetings took place:
- with undergraduate students currently attending the Programme
- with administrative staff including the Head of the Department Secretariat; and staff from the Library and Information Centre
- visited classrooms, lecture halls, libraries and learning resources, offices, and other facilities

- meeting with employers, social partners, and external stakeholders of the private and the public sector
- meeting with members and staff of OMEA and MODIP
- meeting with the Vice-Rector/President of MODIP and the Head of the Department, plus members and staff of OMEA and MODIP.

During the aforementioned meetings, the Panel had the opportunity to meet, talk and interact with all the participants at all meetings. The discussions were very constructive and fruitful and were conducted in a cooperative manner and attitude. During the last meeting, the Panel made an informal presentation of some initial key findings.

The internal evaluation report of the Department and other extensive material were made available to the Panel electronically well in advance through HAHE. More information, documentation and clarifications were made during the meetings. The Department and the University worked diligently in preparing the internal evaluation report and other relevant materials, as well as in organizing and hosting the meetings, including the remote participation of two Panel members. The Department and MODIP provided the Panel members with supplemental materials which were requested by the Panel members. All the meetings included presentations, discussions, and question and answer sessions.

It is the feeling of the EEAP Panel members that the Department performed a good job throughout the internal evaluation process and the objectives of the process have been met. The eagerness of the Department staff to answer questions and provide additional information and clarifications during the meetings are worth noting.

It is, also, worth pointing out that students were especially encouraged by the Panel to talk freely about their overall learning experience. They welcomed the opportunity to participate in this evaluation process and voice their views.

We wish to express our thanks and appreciation to the Department and the University administration for their cooperation, professionalism, and eagerness to provide clarifications and respond to all the questions posed by the Panel.

This Report is based on information collected and views expressed during the meetings as well as on information contained in the internal evaluation report and other documents submitted before and during the meetings, including presentations and clarifications.

III.   New Undergraduate Study Programme in operation Profile

The Department of Political Sciences of the Democritus University of Thrace (DUTH) was established in 2009 (Law No. 21/2009). In 2013, it merged with the Department of Social Administration, in the context of the reconstruction of the academic units in Greek universities, in a new Department named Department of Social Administration and Political Science.

In 2019, by virtue of Article 64 of Law No. 4610/2019, the aforementioned department was split into three distinct University Departments, one of which is the **Department of Political Science**.

Thus, the Department of Political Science was essentially re-established to fulfil the purpose of its initial founding mission in 2009. As defined in article 1 of Law No. 21/2009 which led to the establishment of the Department, the mission of the Department of Political Science is (unofficial translation):

"i) To cultivate and promote political science as a whole through theoretical and applied teaching and research.

ii) To provide its graduates with the necessary resource/tools that ensure their thorough training for their scientific and professional careers.

iii) To contribute to the consolidation of political analysis as a method of approaching domestic and international social phenomena.

iv) To train administrative and programming officers of the state apparatus and public administration organizations and international organizations, including the institutions of the European Union."

The declared overall aim of the undergraduate program is to develop the characteristics of the discipline of political science as it has developed internationally, as well as to cooperate with other disciplines on the basis of common features to promote teaching and research. As such, the Department of Political Science studies the phenomenon of power in all its dimensions be it historically, through a comparative analysis of the social structures from antiquity to the contemporary era; geographically, through the examination of different political systems and power mechanisms; and by analysing the theoretical foundations of power through the study of political theory and philosophy.

The curriculum places emphasis upon the stakeholders and the dynamics of modern political systems, as it examines the broader spectrum of activities ranging from electoral behaviour to the class structures of social interests and from local politics to the international power distribution. The Department aims at educating political scientists capable of coping with the complex demands of knowledge and elaboration of the political phenomena both at national and supranational levels and, at the same time, acquire a critical thought over the processes of function and change of power structures.

The Department offers courses and research opportunities on the basic areas of political science, namely political philosophy and theory, comparative and European politics, political systems, international relations, and international law.

The completion of the programme requires students to accumulate 40 courses (28 compulsory and 12 elective) for a total of 240 European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) credits, leading to the awarding of a bachelor's degree. Students also have the option to write a thesis (in lieu of 2 elective courses) and/or to do an internship (in lieu of one elective course).

Students are required to take five compulsory courses in the first, second, third, and fourth semesters of study, then four compulsory and one elective in the fifth and sixth semesters, and five elective courses in the seventh and eight semesters.

The Department is supported by the Laboratory for Geopolitical Studies and the Computer Laboratory of the former Department of Social Administration and Political Science.

The number of new students admitted to the Programme every year is approximately 180. The total number of registered and active students (of all years) during the 2022-2023 Academic year is 883.

The objectives of the Programme are comparable to those offered by other institutions around Europe. Its content is balanced and appropriately designed to meet international standards and the needs and challenges of a modern society. The structure of the Programme and the courses offered are consistent with the Department's overall objectives, and include required and elective courses, seminars, and practical training.

The Programme is supported by a faculty of 7 permanent members with the Department Chair, who is a Professor in the Faculty of Law, having been appointed in this position as the Department does not meet the criteria of being a fully autonomous Department. Currently the Department also has 7 adjunct members of the teaching staff. It also possesses two administrators.

The Department does not have a postgraduate programme. It has, though, 4 doctoral candidates and a postdoctoral fellow.

Responsible for the design and development of changes to the study programme is the Study Programme Committee of the Department. Responsible for the approval of changes to the study programme is the Assembly of the Department and the Senate of DUTH.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

Principle 1: Strategic Planning, Feasibility and Sustainability of the Academic Unit

Institutions must have developed an appropriate strategy for the establishment and operation of new academic units and the provision of new undergraduate study programmes. This strategy should be documented by specific feasibility and sustainability studies.

By decision of the institutional Senate, the Institutions should address in their strategy issues related to their academic structure in academic units and study programmes, which support the profile, the vision, the mission, and the strategic goal setting of the Institution, within a specific time frame. The strategy of the Institution should articulate the potential benefits, weaknesses, opportunities or risks from the operation of new academic units and study programmes, and plan all the necessary actions towards the achievement of their goals.

The strategy of their academic structure should be documented by specific feasibility and sustainability studies, especially for new academic units and new study programmes.

More specifically, the feasibility study of the new undergraduate study programmes should be accompanied by a four-year business plan to meet specific needs in infrastructure, services, human resources, procedures, financial resources, and management systems.

During the evaluation of the Institutions and their individual academic units in terms of meeting the criteria for the organisation of undergraduate study programmes, particular attention must be place upon:

a. The academic profile and the mission of the academic unit
The profile and mission of the department should be specified. The scientific field of the department should be included in the internationally established scientific fields of Higher Education, as they are designated by the international categorisation of scientific fields in education, by UNESCO (ISCED 2013).

b. The strategy of the Institution for its academic development
The academic development strategy for the operation of the department and the new study programme should be set out. This strategy should result from the investigation of the factors that influence the studies and the research in the scientific field, the investigation of the institutional, economic, developmental, and social parameters that apply in the external environment of the Institution, as well as the possibilities and capabilities that exist within the internal environment (as reflected in a SWOT Analysis: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats). This specific analysis should demonstrate the reason for selecting the scientific field of the new department.

c. The documentation of the feasibility of the operation of the department and the study programme
The feasibility of the operation of the new department should be justified based on:
- *the needs of the national and regional economy (economic sectors, employment, supply-demand, expected academic and professional qualifications)*
- *comparison with other national and international study programmes of the same scientific field*
- *the state-of-the-art developments*

- the existing academic map; the differentiation of the proposed department from the already existing ones needs to be analysed, in addition to the implications of the current image of the academic map in the specific scientific field.

d. The documentation of the sustainability of the new department
Mention must be made to the infrastructure, human resources, funding perspective, services, and all other available resources in terms of:
- educational and research facilities (buildings, rooms, laboratories, equipment, etc.)
- staff (existing and new, by category, specialty, rank and laboratory). A distinct five-year plan is required, documenting the commitment of the School and of the Institution for filling in the necessary faculty positions to cover at least the entire pre-defined core curriculum
- funding (funding possibility from public or non-public sources)
- services (central, departmental / student support, digital, administrative, etc.)

e. The structure of studies
The structure of the studies should be briefly presented, namely:
- **The organisation of studies:** The courses and the categories to which they belong; the distribution of the courses into semesters; the alignment of the courses with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).
- **Learning process:** Documentation must be provided as to how the student-centered approach is ensured (modes of teaching and evaluation of students beyond the traditional methods).
- **Learning outcomes:** Knowledge, skills and competences acquired by graduates, as well as the professional rights awarded must be mentioned.

f. The number of admitted students
- The proposed number of admitted students over a five-year period should be specified.
- Any similar departments in other HEIs with the possibility of student transfers from / to the proposed department should be mentioned.

g. Postgraduate studies and research
- It is necessary to indicate research priorities in the scientific field, the opportunities for interdisciplinary research, the challenges towards new knowledge, possible research collaborations, etc.
- In addition, the postgraduate and doctoral programmes offered by the academic unit, the research projects performed, and the research performance of the faculty members should be mentioned.

Relevant documentation

- *Introductory Report by the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) addressing the above points with the necessary documentation*
- *Updated Strategic Plan of the Institution that will include its proposed academic reconstruction, in view of the planned operation of new department(s) (incl. updated SWOT analysis at institutional level)*
- *Feasibility and sustainability studies for the establishment and operation of the new academic unit and the new study programme*
- *Four-year business plan*

Study Programme Compliance

The Department of Political Science operates as an independent academic unit within DUTH since September 1, 2019, after the division of the Department of Social Administration and Political Science into three departments: Social Policy, Social Work, and Political Science.

As defined in article 1 of Law No. 21/2009 which led to the establishment of the Department, the mission of the Department of Political Science is (unofficial translation):

"i) To cultivate and promote political science as a whole through theoretical and applied teaching and research.
ii) To provide its graduates with the necessary resource/tools that ensure their thorough training for their scientific and professional careers.
iii) To contribute to the consolidation of political analysis as a method of approaching domestic and international social phenomena.
iv) To train administrative and programming officers of the state apparatus and public administration organizations and international organizations, including the institutions of the European Union."

In addition to the missions mentioned in Article 1 of Law No. 21/2009, the aim of the Department is the teaching of Political Science and research in Political Science in all its relevant facets and fields, based on the interests of its faculty members, taking into account the contemporary developments, trends and changes both in political science and in the domestic and international systems that partly affect the trends in political science. In this context, Political Science is necessary to explain changes, predict and discern trends both at the domestic level and in the international arena. The Department thus aims to study changes in political behaviour, proceed with its quantification, explanations, and analyses.

DUTH's detailed strategic action plan sets the bar high by describing the objectives for the university as a whole as well as setting out the rules, procedures, and actions to be taken to achieve the implementation of the objectives. These are based on the increased productivity of its human resources (both scientific/academic and administrative staff), encouraging innovation and interdisciplinary work, as well as synergizing with the local and regional communities to help them deal with their challenges.

DUTH has been guided and aided by a number of factors including its longstanding and established presence in Greek academia (since 1973). Its 25,000 strong human resources (including staff, students, external scientific and administrative partners, etc.) make it the largest public and private entity in Thrace as it spreads across the four largest cities of Thrace. DUTH is comprised of 8 Schools/Faculties, 20 Departments with 20 Undergraduate Study Programs and 58 Postgraduate Programs. Additionally, it has an extensive network of complementary academic, educational, research and training activities with both national and international reach.

The growing geopolitical importance of the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace bordering Turkey and Bulgaria and the relevance of the port cities of Alexandroupoli and Kavala as well as those of Komotini, Drama, and Xanthi imply an enhanced role for the university and its academic units, in particular those, such as the Department of Political Science, in enhancing the socio-economic profile of the region. This is well reflected in DUTH's strategy for its academic development.

It is also reflected in the Department's strategy although there seems to be a mismatch between expectations and reality as the study programme does not currently reflect its potential to meet the needs of the region in particular with relevance to increased student interest in learning more about international relations, international law, economics, and development. In this regard, the Department does not currently meet fully the needs of the local and regional communities.

The building facilities for the programme are not ideal. The Department has access to a large lecture hall which is in fact the university's main auditorium. It also makes use of two functional smaller rooms which are used for the elective courses as well as the periodic use of classrooms provided by other departments. The Department also has five offices for its academic staff. There are expectations that with the construction of a new state of the art building on campus, the Department's classrooms as well as the offices of its faculty members and its administrators will be housed there but no concrete decision has been made. It should be noted that this is an issue beyond the purview of the Department; nevertheless, it should be stressed that the Department's staff have managed to make the existing available facilities functional to meet the needs of the Department and its students.

The Department is at a satisfactory level in terms of meeting its educational needs. The teaching staff, in general terms, is sufficient to meet the teaching needs of the programme. Yet, the Programme's curriculum has not substantially changed since it was first introduced in 2009. While the Department can meet the needs of the training programme with the cooperation of other departments and reliance on ESPA (European Structural and Development Funds) funds, it still needs the appointment of additional lecturers.

In terms of addressing the specific questions in the Mapping Grid and Assessment:

Is the scientific field of the new undergraduate programme included in the internationally established scientific fields of Higher Education, as they are designated by the international categorisation of scientific fields in education, by UNESCO (ISCED 2013)?

Yes, it is. In particular, the scientific field of the Department of Political Science is part of the internationally established scientific fields of Higher Education, as determined by the international categorization of scientific fields in education by UNESCO (ISCED 2013). In particular, it belongs to the broader field: Social Sciences, Journalism and Information (03), to the specific field: Social and behavioural sciences (031) and to the specialized field: Political sciences and civics (0312).

Does the Strategic Plan of the Institution include its proposed academic reconstruction in view of the planned operation of the new department/ undergraduate study programme?
Yes, both DUTH's and the Department's Strategic Plans include the proposed academic reconstruction of the new department/undergraduate study programme.

Is there a SWOT analysis at Institutional level that considers the potential benefits, limitations, opportunities and risks accruing from the delivery of the new undergraduate programme?

Yes, both DUTH and the Department include a SWOT analysis that considers potential benefits, limitations, opportunities, and risks accruing from the delivery of the new undergraduate program.

Does the feasibility & sustainability study for the new undergraduate programme sufficiently address the related objectives, input and expected output?
Yes.

Is there a four-year business plan of the academic unit that addresses issues of structure, operation, activities of the academic unit and includes provision of critical figures (number of admitted students, staff, funding, infrastructure) for the new undergraduate programme?
Yes.

Nevertheless, as mentioned above there is a disconnect between meeting the necessary standards and basic requirements of the programme in order for it to be certified and whether it addresses the contemporary needs of the university and the wider community.

The Department does not yet offer a postgraduate programme.

Panel Judgement

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

g. Postgraduate studies	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	**X**
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

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

Panel Recommendations

- The EEAP recommends further efforts to continuously increase the number of teaching and research staff.

- The issue of gender balance also needs to be addressed as over 90% of both academic and administrative staff are male.

- The Department needs to urgently reconsider the content of its Study Programme by addressing the needs and expectations of its student body and the growing geopolitical relevance of the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace which borders both Bulgaria and Turkey.

- A plan for enhanced cooperation in education and research with higher education institutions and relevant academic departments in Bulgaria and Turkey should be formulated at a first stage while further education and research links with other higher education institutions and relevant departments in neighbouring and regional states should also be considered.

- The Department's partners within the context in the Erasmus+ program needs to be expanded to prioritize student, academic, and administrative exchanges with like-minded institutions and programs. This implies enhancing the motivation of students, in particular, to travel and study abroad. Also, in this context, the Department should seriously consider including in its curriculum some courses in English to facilitate both the arrival of foreign students as well as to improve the English language skills of the Department's own students.

- The physical resources (lecture halls, library, offices, etc.) of the Programme need to be improved.

Principle 2: Quality Assurance Policy of the Institution and the Academic Unit

The Institution should have in place an accredited Internal Quality Assurance System, and should formulate and apply a Quality Assurance Policy, which is part of its strategy, specialises in the operation of the new academic units and the new study programmes, and is accompanied by annual quality assurance goals for the continuous development and improvement of the academic units and the study programmes.

The quality assurance policy of the Institution must be formulated in the form of a published statement, which is implemented by all stakeholders. It focuses on the achievement of special annual quality goals related to the quality assurance of the new study programme offered by the academic unit. In order to implement this policy, the Institution, among others, commits itself to put into practice quality procedures that will demonstrate: the adequacy and quality of the academic unit's resources; the suitability of the structure and organisation of the curriculum; the appropriateness of the qualifications of the teaching staff; the quality of support services of the academic unit and its staffing with appropriate administrative personnel. The Institution also commits itself to conduct an annual internal evaluation of the new undergraduate programme (UGP), realised by the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG) in collaboration with the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) of the Institution.

The quality assurance policy of the academic unit includes its commitment to implement quality procedures that will demonstrate: a) the adequacy of the structure and organisation of the curriculum, b) the pursuit of learning outcomes and qualifications in accordance with the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education, c) the promotion of the quality and effectiveness of the teaching work, d) the adequacy of the qualifications of the teaching staff, e) the promotion of the quality and quantity of the research work of the members of the academic unit, f) the ways of linking teaching with research, g) the level of demand for graduates' qualifications in the labour market, h) the quality of support services, such as administration, libraries and student care, i) the implementation of an annual review and audit of the quality assurance system of the UGP through the cooperation of the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG) with the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) of the Institution.

Relevant documentation
- *Revised Quality Assurance Policy of the Institution*
- *Quality Assurance Policy of the academic unit*
- *Quality target setting of the Institution and the academic unit (utilising the S.M.A.R.T. methodology)*

Study Programme Compliance

The University (DUTH) considers the improvement of quality and of the Quality Assurance Policy as a continuous development process and implements procedures for recording all internal evaluation of its operations.

The monitoring of the quality of the study programme is continuous in the Department through the availability of resources for teaching counselling for each course, advising students through the Academic Advisor for Studies, and providing assistance through its committees and university services.

The main instrument of the quality assurance policy of the study programme is the Internal Evaluation Team (OMEA), which works in close cooperation with the University's Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP). The overall impression of the Study Programme's Assurance Policy is that although an effort is being made to ensure that it meets quality compliance, it has not been very successful in doing so to date. As previously mentioned, the study programme has not been particularly revised since it was first introduced. According to the presentation provided by the Department, the discussion at Departmental level regarding the revision of the study program began only recently with a view to be completed by the end of the current Academic Year. This is in contrast with the other two Departments that emerged from the former Department of Social Administration and Political Science in 2019, both of which have upgraded their study programmes. The fact that the Department is not fully staffed at what it considers to be its full potential does not justify the slow process in revamping the study programme to reflect the needs of its students, the local and regional communities, and potential employers of its graduates while also reflecting the enhanced geopolitical role of the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace.

The same applies to the low number of student evaluations of the courses taught. According to data given to the EEAP by the Department, only 330 evaluations were collected during the entire 2020-2021 Academic Year. This number is low considering the fact that over 880 students are registered in the Programme and the number of courses taught over the course of an academic year is close to 40. Nevertheless, it should be noted that the student satisfaction with teaching is high (on average 4.3 out of a high score of 5 for the 2021-2022 Academic Year).

There are also some question marks regarding how well the students have been informed regarding the academic services offered to them. During the meeting with students, the EEAP members were told that some students were not aware of the institution of the Academic Advisor while others suggested that they did not think that they needed to seek advice from their assigned Academic Advisors. This suggests that more work needs to be done in guiding the Programme's students during their studies.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Continue with the process towards Departmental autonomy.
- Emphasize and improve the interaction with students and the information provided to them.
- Improve the process of internal monitoring of the Departments' quality assurance.

Principle 3: Design, Approval and Monitoring of the Quality of the New Undergraduate Programmes

Institutions should design the new undergraduate programmes following a defined written process, which will involve the participants, information sources and the approval committees for the programme. The objectives, the expected learning outcomes, the intended professional qualifications and the ways to achieve them are set out in the programme design. The above details, as well as information on the programme's structure, are published in the Student Guide.

> *The Institutions develop their new undergraduate study programmes, following a well-defined procedure. The academic profile, the identity and orientation of the programme, the objectives, the subject areas, the structure and organisation, the expected learning outcomes and the intended professional qualifications according to the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education are described at this stage. An important new element in the structure of the programmes is the introduction of courses for the acquisition of digital skills. The above components should be taken into consideration and constitute the subject of the programme design, which, among other things, should include: elements of the Institution's strategy, labour market data and employment prospects of graduates, smooth progression of students throughout the stages of the programme, the anticipated student workload according to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), the option of providing work experience to the students, the linking of teaching and research, the international experience in study programmes of similar disciplines, the relevant regulatory framework, and the official procedure for the approval of the programme by the Institution.*
>
> *The procedure of approval or revision of the programmes provides for the verification of compliance with the basic requirements of the Standards by the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU).*

Relevant documentation

- *Senate decision for the establishment of the UGP*
- *Curriculum structure: courses, course categories (including courses for the acquisition of digital skills), ECTS awarded, expected learning outcomes according to the EQF, internship, mobility opportunities.*
- *Labour market data regarding the employment of graduates, international experience in a related scientific field.*
- *Student Guide*
- *Course outlines*
- *Teaching staff (list of areas of specialisation, its relation to the courses taught, employment relationship)*
- *QAU minutes for the internal evaluation of the new study programme and its compliance with the Standards*

Study Programme Compliance

The creation of the Department of Political Science at DUTH was a necessary response to several challenges including the need to streamline the Department of Social Administration

and Political Science and to create three more coherent academic units from it, including the Department of Political Science in 2019. Following the implementation of all required procedures and a requisite decision by DUTH's Senate and guided by the Rectorate, the Department became operational.

The Department assures the interdisciplinary nature of its curriculum with the appointment of a qualified academic team, with a focus on the stakeholders and the dynamics of modern political systems, by examining the broader spectrum of activities ranging from electoral behaviour to the class structures of social interests and from local politics to the international power distribution.

The Study Programme is organised according to the *European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System* (ECTS). The Programme is effectively published in the online Student's guide with course outlines and descriptions, relevant bibliographies and expected learning outcomes.

The Study Programme's expected learning outcomes are:

- To critically understand fundamental concepts in politics and political science
- To understand and critically approach key theorists
- To identify the main actors in the political arena (parties, pressure groups, etc.) and the relations between them in the policy process
- To classify political regimes, including political and party systems in Greece and the rest of the world in a comparative context
- To understand the complex relationship between party systems, electoral systems, and electoral results
- To possess a thorough knowledge of the key players in the arena of international politics.
- To understand and analyse international relations as part of the interaction between the actors of the international system, including the synergies between internal/ national politics and international affairs and international law.

The Department monitors both the recent developments in political science (research papers, publications, conferences), as well as in its teaching (curriculums of other departments). It also monitors the developments in international politics to account for the constantly evolving cognitive context which forms the basis for the study of political science.

Its programme has been enriched with the founding of the Laboratory of Geopolitical Analysis in 2020 which aims to support the development of the Department via the hosting of seminars, conferences, and the conduct of research.

Nevertheless, as was noted previously, the programme has not been sufficiently updated over the years to meet the interests of its increasing number of students, the needs of the labour market, and the geographic position of DUTH and the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace. The Department also claims that it is also supported by the "Politics Society Komotini" (founded in 2016) in terms of its outreach to the local community although the EEAP members feel that its precise impact is unclear.

It is also building an Erasmus/Erasmus+ network which has a long way to go to reach its full capacity and to contribute further to the Department's and the Program's internationalization. In fact, only two of its partner institutions are from neighbouring Turkey while there are no university partners from neighbouring Bulgaria.

The lack of classes offered in languages other than Greek, in particular in English, is also an issue as it hinders both the further internationalization of the program, and the quality of its content.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The Erasmus/Erasmus+ network needs to be prioritized. It needs to be expanded beyond the partnerships with 7 partner departments it currently holds. Also, a culture of encouraging students and staff (both academic and administrative) to take part in the opportunities provided by the Erasmus program needs to be inculcated.

The creation of some classes in English needs to be encouraged. These will help both the Department's students with improving their foreign language and research skills as well as enhance the international profile of the Department.

DUTH should consider the creation of a Foreign Language Centre which would provide added value for the Department's students and the degree they acquire as well as enhance the profile of the Department.

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

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

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

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

Relevant documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

The Department makes a strong effort to cultivate a student-centered educational environment. Different courses apply different pedagogical approaches, from lecturing, to team-learning, discussion, and in-class team exercises. The required courses, which comprise most of the curriculum, aim to create fundamental and theoretical knowledge, while elective courses, which comprise the minority of the curriculum, are geared towards topical and thematic knowledge. In the place of two electives, students have the option of pursuing an internship or a senior thesis. Overall, the curriculum tends to impart theoretical rather than thematic or topical knowledge.

The majority of course syllabi are well structured, well planned, and comprehensive in terms of including learning outcomes, teaching methods, material to be covered, and means of student assessment. However, some syllabi are still under development and only include parts of the necessary components.

The University houses a Support Centre for Teaching and Learning, but its use seems not to be institutionalized or ingrained in the teaching operations of the Department. The student appeals process is also in place, but reliance seems to be on informal channels.

The framework for student advising is in place, and students are evenly divided between the seven faculty in the Department. For most of the students the policy works well, but there are students that for whatever reason seem to find themselves in the fringes or even outside the reach of advisors.

The policy of students' evaluations of courses is implemented and it appears that about ten per cent of students do complete them. They are positive overall, but the completion ratio is too low to be useful as a representative sample.

Similarly, the number of students pursuing a senior thesis is rather small and does not reflect the general state of learning. The same applies for the option of internship, as relatively few are being pursued or awarded.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Revise the curriculum reducing the number of compulsory courses and increasing the number of electives.

- Make the curriculum less theoretical and more practical.

Principle 5: Student Admission, Progression, Recognition of Academic Qualifications and Award of Degrees and Certificates of Competence of the New Study Programmes

Academic units should develop and apply published regulations addressing all aspects and phases of studies of the programme (admission, progression, recognition and degree award).

All the issues from the beginning to the end of studies should be governed by the internal regulations of the academic units. Indicatively:

- ✓ *the registration procedure of the admitted students and the necessary documents - according to the law - and the support of the newly admitted students*

- ✓ *student rights and obligations, and monitoring of student progression*

- ✓ *internship issues, granting of scholarships*

- ✓ *the procedures and terms for writing the thesis (diploma or degree)*

- ✓ *the procedure of award and recognition of degrees, the duration of studies, the conditions for progression and assurance of the progress of students in their studies*

as well as

- ✓ *the terms and conditions for enhancing student mobility*

Appropriate recognition procedures rely on relevant academic practice for recognition of credits among various European academic departments and Institutions in line with the principles of the Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region. Graduation represents the culmination of the students' study period. Students need to receive documentation explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes, and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed (Diploma Supplement).

All the above must be made public within the context of the Student Guide.

Relevant documentation

- ▪ *Internal regulation for the operation of the new study programme*
- ▪ *Regulation of studies, internship, mobility and student assignments*
- ▪ *Printed Diploma Supplement*

Certificate from the President of the academic unit that the diploma supplement is awarded to all graduates without exception together with the degree or the certificate of completion of studies

Study Programme Compliance

Students enter the Undergraduate Programme of Political Science through a national – competition-based – system organized by the Ministry of Education. The Greek educational system allows for student transfers between universities after the national placement has been concluded.

First year students are introduced to research practices, e.g., how to use library resources like databases and other bibliographical tools. Furthermore, they are informed of the Study Guide and the courses offered. The Department implements the practice of academic advisors who assist students with their academic decisions during their studies. Due to the high numbers of students in the Department, the academic advisors/student ratio is estimated to be 1/55.

Students in the meeting with the Panel remarked that their professors are cooperative and willing to answer their questions both via email and in person, but they highlighted that sometimes the answer via email is rather slow. Furthermore, the teaching staff follows the necessary procedures in advising students towards writing a thesis. However, the thesis at the undergraduate level is optional. Additionally, it equals to two elective courses, and it should be around 10,000 words in length.

The Erasmus student exchange programme is playing an important role in the Department, both in terms of sending its own students to other European Universities as well as hosting students from European Universities. Existing agreements that foster exchanges through the Erasmus programme are fewer than the faculty deems desirable, and there is a plan to increase the number of incoming and outgoing Erasmus students. Specifically, the Department is in cooperation with 6-7 European Universities. DUTH has a very informative Erasmus (+) Office, where students who are interested can visit and attain further information for Erasmus (+) Programmes.

It should be added that the Department does not offer any courses in English. This might be an inhibiting factor explaining the absence of incoming Erasmus students. The Panel feels that the Department should offer such courses and have them open to its own students, as part of the electives.

There is an internship corresponding to one course. During the Panel's meeting with the students, the students highlighted the importance to participate in internships in the public and private sector.

The ECTS system is applied across the curriculum, and the University does provide students with a Diploma Supplement issued upon graduation.

Panel Judgement

Principle 5: Student admission, progression, recognition of academic qualifications, and award of degrees and certificates of competence of the new study programmes	
Fully compliant	**X**
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- Promoting mobility of students via the Erasmus programmes.

- It is advisable that the Department offers English courses to the students.

- It is advisable that the Department uploads weekly the academic advising hours for each advisor to the Department's website.

- The Department should systematize participation in the internship program, promote additional participation, and extend its duration.

Principle 6: Ensuring the Competence and High Quality of the Teaching Staff of the New Undergraduate Study Programmes

Institutions should assure themselves of the competence, the level of knowledge and skills of the teaching staff of the academic units, and apply fair and transparent processes for their recruitment, training and further development.

The Institution should attend to the adequacy of the teaching staff of the academic unit, the appropriate staff-student ratio, the suitable categories of staff, the appropriate subject areas and specialisations, the fair and objective recruitment process, the high research performance, the training – development, the staff development policy (including participation in mobility schemes, conferences and educational leaves- as mandated by law).

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

Relevant documentation

- *Procedures and criteria for teaching staff recruitment*
- *Regulations or employment contracts, and obligations of the teaching staff*
- *Policy for staff recruitment, support and development*
- *Performance of the teaching staff in scientific-research and teaching work, also based on internationally recognised systems of scientific evaluation (e.g., Google Scholar, Scopus, etc.)*

Study Programme Compliance

The Department, recognising the importance of teaching and research, follows a clear, transparent, and fair process for the recruitment of qualified staff. Currently the academic staff consists of seven permanent members (two new appointments are expected later this year). Their expertise, international background, high qualifications, and enthusiasm enhance the quality of classroom teaching and research output. There is also adjunct teaching staff consisting of Ph.D. holders who are active researchers and scholars but do not hold permanent positions. In addition, some courses are taught by teaching staff from other departments.

The teaching staff follow innovative and widely used pedagogical practices and instructional methods that meet international standards. There is enthusiasm and skills in utilizing new technologies, both in the classroom and in interaction among faculty and students. The Panel had the opportunity to interact with students and received the impression that they think highly of their teachers. Most of them talked with respect about their professors, the departmental culture, and the learning environment. They confirmed that their teachers are committed, mostly accessible, understanding, and ready to provide support and guidance.

The Department and the University provide encouragement and adequate opportunities for the professional development of the faculty, although there is plenty of room for improvement. Teaching staff should be commended for the firm commitment and effort in maintaining high-quality teaching despite the obstacles and difficulties created by shrinking resources and other external factors for which the Department cannot be blamed. It should be pointed out that there is a collaborative climate with the Department, reflecting mutual respect and collegial spirit. Nevertheless, this collaborate spirit could be improved.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The collegial atmosphere in the Department and accessibility of faculty by the students should be maintained and further enhanced, as it is instrumental in sharing experiences and getting feedback.

- Faculty members could intensify their efforts and enhance their high-quality research output, especially by publishing in international peer-reviewed journals and publishing houses.

- The Department and the University could seek ways and means to provide further support to faculty members to enhance research and intensify their efforts for attracting external funding, especially through international and European projects. This is in line with the need to address the general systemic problem of an inadequately funded public university system. Addressing this issue will also help meet the broader challenges which universities and departments are facing, such as attracting and retaining more faculty of international calibre.

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

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

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

Relevant documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

The University provides the Department with access to its services and facilities including classrooms and the main library, which holds a great collection of materials and offers digital access to students. The Department has also its own infrastructure facilities, including 1 auditorium with a capacity of 500 people, 2 smaller classrooms, a seminar/conference room, a lab, and a library.

Classrooms seem to be equipped with appropriate technology (e.g., projectors and microphones), and the secretariat can make available additional equipment including laptops if needed. The bus service to the campus seems to be sporadic to meet the transportation needs of the students.

Several other IT tools and services are available to the students that enhance teaching and learning including MS Teams, Skype, webmail, SPSS, Academic ID, and e-class. The Department

uses its website extensively to communicate relevant information to the students. Overall, the logistics infrastructure seems to be adequate and both faculty and students expressed satisfaction with the available range of services provided. Still, there can be an upgrade of the website so that the information can be passed on to the students and the faculty easier and faster.

The library is organised with subscriptions to online journals, numerous e-books, archives, and audio-visual material, but the building is not well maintained. The accessibility of the databases can be improved. The lack of separate meeting rooms and of sufficient places for studying in the library limits the students' ability to meet and have discussions.

The Department and DUTH provide several other services to the students including the orientation week for the 1st year students, as well as health services, psychological support, and studies and career advisory support. There is an Office of the Student Advocate where students can go and ask questions and solve problems regarding their academic experience. As both the Department and the students mentioned, this Institution plays a great role in helping first-year students adjust to university life.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The already existing infrastructure should be renovated, and new equipment should be provided.
- There needs to be a cafeteria for students to study and socialise.
- The number and quality of classrooms should be increased.
- A new modern website should be built with modern software and easy access to everyone.
- It would be important to consider the creation of an office that focuses on serving students with disabilities.
- The Department should explore opportunities for flexible, hybrid forms of learning.

Principle 8: Collection, Analysis and Use of Information for the Organisation and Operation of New Undergraduate Programmes

The Institutions and their academic units bear full responsibility for collecting, analysing and using information, aimed at the efficient management of undergraduate programmes of study and related activities, in an integrated, effective and easily accessible way.

> *Effective procedures for collecting and analysing information on the operation of Institutions, academic units and study programmes feed data into the internal quality assurance system. The following data is of interest: key performance indicators for the student body profile, student progression, success and drop-out rates, student satisfaction with the programme, availability of learning resources and student support. The completion of the fields of National Information System for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (NISQA) should be correct and complete with the exception of the fields that concern graduates in which a null value is registered.*

Relevant documentation

- *Report from the National Information System for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (NISQA) at the level of the Institution, the department and the new UGP*
- *Operation of an information management system for the collection of administrative data for the implementation of the programme (Students' Record)*
- *Other tools and procedures designed to collect data on the academic and administrative functions of the academic unit and the study programme*

Study Programme Compliance

The Department's presentation focused more on its history and philosophical orientation rather than on specific operational data and information. The Department relies on the University's data collection services, and these are fully operational. OMEA has the ability to mine data and for the most part that is happening. The Department has a good grasp on the number of students enrolled per year, and the number of students from the previous department still being served. Important data such as the number of internships and the number of theses served by the Department were not readily available.

For the students' academic progress and records, the Department relies on the University's electronic platform, which is a university-wide service. The panel's visit with the Registrar office demonstrated that the process is institutionalized and functions as well as it can be.

For the electronic teaching platform, the Department relies on e-Class and that also works as well as can be.

In general terms, the data on academic and administrative functions are compiled and are available, but not always readily so.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The Department should make greater use of data to implement academic policies already in place.

- Policy making and implementation should be data driven.

- Surveys can be administered to student to gauge their preferences in curricular construction, especially before the next major revision is undertaken.

Principle 9: Public Information Concerning the New Undergraduate Programmes

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

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

Relevant documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

Most necessary information is on the Departmental website (or in some cases on the central website of the University). The Department's website (both in Greek and English) is well-structured, clear but not sufficiently user-friendly, meaning that it needs to be updated and made easier to use. Staff CVs are available in Greek and in English. The Department's academic policy is also available online. Information is clear, generally up-to-date, and quite easy to access. The course outlines are available in the Department's Study Guide.

In general, the Department does make all the relevant information available to public. In addition to its website, the Department has internal mechanisms for information and communication with students, such as the platform of the digital secretariat 'unistudent' and the e-class.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The Panel recommends that the website be regularly updated and upgraded.

Principle 10: Periodic Internal Review of the New Study Programmes

Institutions and academic units should have in place an internal quality assurance system, for the audit and annual internal review of their new programmes, so as to achieve the objectives set for them, through monitoring and amendments, with a view to continuous improvement. Any actions taken in the above context, should be communicated to all parties concerned.

> *Regular monitoring, review and revision of the new study programmes aim at maintaining the level of educational provision and creating a supportive and effective learning environment for students. The above comprise the evaluation of: the content of the programme in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up to date; the changing needs of society; the students' workload, progression and completion; the effectiveness of the procedures for the assessment of students; the students' expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme; the learning environment, support services, and their fitness for purpose for the programme. Programmes are reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders. The information collected is analysed and the programme is adapted to ensure that it is up-to-date.*

Relevant documentation

- *Procedure for the re-evaluation, redefinition and updating of the curriculum*
- *Procedure for mitigating weaknesses and upgrading the structure of the UGP and the learning process*
- *Feedback processes on strategy implementation and quality targeting of the new UGP and relevant decision-making processes (students, external stakeholders)*
- *Results of the annual internal evaluation of the study programme by the QAU and the relevant minutes*

Study Programme Compliance

The Department and DUTH have in place internal self-assessment procedures and mechanisms, which are part of an efficient quality assurance system, providing for regular monitoring, review and revision of the Programme. MODIP (Μονάδα Διασφάλισης Ποιότητας), OMEA (Ομάδα Εσωτερικής Αξιολόγησης), and the departmental Study Programme Committee (Επιτροπή Προγράμματος Σπουδών) play a central role throughout the various stages of self-assessment. The outcomes of self-assessment are properly recorded, analysed, shared and utilized, especially in formulating and communicating recommendations and action plans.

Efforts are made to review and revise the Programme to ensure that it is up to date and in line with the latest research and pedagogical approaches. Revisions are also aimed at harmonizing its objectives and content with international standards and practices. They also take into consideration the changing needs of society and the expectations of students who provide evaluations of courses and Faculty, as well as the overall learning environment. Nevertheless, the core of the programme has remained unchanged since 2009.

The EEAP is convinced that the commitment of the Department and the ongoing debate on issues of monitoring and improvement demonstrate that high quality research and teaching are firm and clear objectives embedded in the Programme. In general, the on-going monitoring and upgrading of the Programme reflect an academically rigorous department that is in need of an open departmental and internal university quality assurance process.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The Department's quality assurance committee may wish to consider having a more structured procedure -- such as regular scheduled meetings and timeframes -- to ensure that ongoing monitoring and periodic reviews are sustained and further enhanced.

Principle 11: Regular External Evaluation and Accreditation of the New Undergraduate Programmes

The new undergraduate study programmes should regularly undergo evaluation by panels of external experts set by HAHE, aiming at accreditation. The results of the external evaluation and accreditation are used for the continuous improvement of the Institutions, academic units and study programmes. The term of validity of the accreditation is determined by HAHE.

HAHE is responsible for administrating the programme accreditation process which is realised as an external evaluation procedure and implemented by a panel of independent experts. HAHE grants accreditation of programmes, based on the Reports submitted by the panels, with a specific term of validity, following to which revision is required. The accreditation of the quality of the programmes acts as a means of verification of the compliance of the programme with the Standards, and as a catalyst for improvement, while opening new perspectives towards the international standing of the awarded degrees. Both academic units and institutions must consistently consider the conclusions and the recommendations submitted by the panels of experts for the continuous improvement of the programme.

Relevant documentation

- *Progress report on the results from the utilisation of the recommendations of the external evaluation of the Institution and of the IQAS Accreditation Report.*

Study Programme Compliance

This is a new Programme and as such it has not been externally evaluated before. It is be pointed out, however, that throughout the current accreditation process it was convincingly demonstrated that the University and the Department are committed to the letter, spirit, and process of quality assurance. It was also evident that all members of staff (teaching and administrative), as well students and other stakeholders are aware of the importance of external review and the contribution it can make in improving the Programme. On the other hand, the fact that the process of reviewing the academic program has begun only recently during the current Academic Year, does not reflect well on the Department.

Panel Judgement

Principle 11: Regular external evaluation and accreditation of the new undergraduate programmes	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- The Department and DUTH are expected to consider using, in an appropriate and target-oriented manner, the findings of the external evaluation and accreditation process for the continuous improvement of the Programme.

- The Department needs to be more committed and systematic in the ongoing review of the Programme and its outputs.

Principle 12: Monitoring the Transition from Previous Undergraduate Study Programmes to the New Ones

Institutions and academic units apply procedures for the transition from previously existing undergraduate study programmes to new ones, in order to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Standards.

Applies in cases where the department implements, in addition to the new UGPs, any pre-existing UGPs from departments of former Technological Educational Institutions (TEI) or from departments that were merged / renamed / abolished.

Institutions should implement procedures for the transition from former UGPs to new ones, in order to ensure their compliance with the requirements of the Standards. More specifically, the institution and the academic unit must have a) the necessary learning resources, b) appropriate teaching staff, c) structured curriculum (courses, ECTS, learning outcomes), d) study regulations, award of diploma and diploma supplement, and e) system of data collection and use, with particular reference to the data of the graduates of the pre-existing UGP. In this context, the Institutions and the academic units prepare a plan for the foreseen transition period of the existing UGP until its completion, the costs caused to the Institution by its operation as well as possible measures and proposals for its smooth delivery and termination. This planning includes data on the transition and subsequent progression of students in the respective new UGP of the academic unit, as well as the specific graduation forecast for students enrolled under the previous status.

Relevant documentation

- *The planning of the Institution for the foreseen transition period, the operating costs and the specific measures or proposals for the smooth implementation and completion of the programme*
- *The study regulations, template for the degree and the diploma supplement*
- *Name list of teaching staff, status, subject and the course they teach / examine*
- *Report of Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) on the progress of the transition and the degree of completion of the programme. In the case of UGP of a former Technological Educational Institution (TEI), the report must include a specific reference to how the internship was implemented*

Study Programme Compliance

The current curriculum of the Department dates back to 2009 when the Department was first established. The curriculum underwent a revision prior to 2015 when the Department was integrated in what was then called Public Administration and Political Science. In 2019, this Department was divided into three: Social Work, Public Policy, and Political Science.

Overall, about 50 per cent of the curriculum has been changed, but its core has remained the same. From that point of view, the transition challenge has not been as great. Still, there are more than 300 students from the previous program who are still active. This is not due to transition issues, but due to circumstances one finds in educational practices in the country. The Department provided no evidence of any efforts to encourage the older students to complete their studies.

It should be said that the Department will be facing a greater transition challenge in the near future when a major curricular revision is being anticipated with the arrival of new teaching staff and the elevation of the department to autonomous status. This should be a critical juncture for the Department, and it should be an opportunity to make it more vigorous, more innovative, more practical, and more adept to the geopolitical realities of the times.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The Department should be proactive in anticipation of an incoming curricular review.

- The Department should conduct surveys to gauge the academic orientation of the student body.

- The Department should do a market analysis to determine the market dynamics of the region.

- The future curriculum should strive for a niche dictated by the geopolitical realities of the region and thus differentiate itself from other political science curricula in the country.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I.   Features of Good Practice

- There is a general willingness by the Department's Faculty to work together and revamp the Programme to meet the exigencies and expectations of the University, the student body and the current geopolitical context.

- The Department has done been diligent in its preparation of all relevant documentation pertaining to the Quality Assurance Process.

- The University and its relevant units, MODIP, have been efficient in guiding the Department in preparing for the Process.

- The relatively young age of most of the Department's Faculty members helps foster greater interaction with the student body.

II.   Areas of Weakness

- Lack of gender balance both among faculty members and administrative staff.

- The Department is not yet autonomous.

- The Study Programme has not been considerably revamped and updated.

- The internationalisation of the Department is weak.

- The Erasmus+ programme is not up to par. This also applies to motivation students and staff to take part in Erasmus+ exchanges.

- The process of revising the study process has only begun relatively recently.

- The number of student evaluations is very low.

- There are no classes offered in English.

- The course curriculum is too theoretical.

- The physical infrastructure is not ideal.

- The links between the study program and the market dynamics of the region are not clear.

III.　Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- The Department must address the issue of gender balance both with the hiring of future faculty members and administrative staff.

- The Department needs to become autonomous soon in order to better streamline its administrative and academic processes.

- The Department needs to urgently reconsider the content of its Study Programme by addressing the needs and expectations of its student body and the growing geopolitical relevance of the Region of Eastern Macedonia and Thrace which borders both Bulgaria and Turkey.

- A plan for enhanced cooperation in education and research with higher education institutions and relevant academic departments in Bulgaria and Turkey should be formulated at a first stage while further education and research links with other higher education institutions and relevant departments in neighbouring and regional states should also be considered.

- The Department's partners within the context in the Erasmus+ program needs to be expanded to prioritize student, academic, and administrative exchanges with like-minded institutions and programs. This implies enhancing the motivation of students, in particular, to travel and study abroad. Also, in this context, the Department should seriously consider including in its curriculum some courses in English to facilitate both the arrival of foreign students as well as to improve the English language skills of the Department's own students.

- The Department must quickly revise its study program. It needs to reduce the number of compulsory courses and increase the number of electives. The curriculum also must be less theoretical and more practice oriented.

- Efforts need to be made to increase the number of student evaluations of the courses taught and to systematically assess them.

- Efforts need to be made to better inform students as to the various services available to them both at university level and Department level.

- The Department needs to include several courses in English in the Study Programme.

- The University should consider the creation of a Foreign Language Centre.

- The Department and the University could seek ways and means to provide further support to faculty members to enhance research and intensify their efforts for attracting external funding, especially through international and European projects.

- A new modern website should be built with modern software and easy access to everyone.

- It would be important for the University to consider the creation of an office that focuses on serving students with disabilities.

o The Department and DUTH are expected to consider using, in an appropriate and target-oriented manner, the findings of the external evaluation and accreditation process for the continuous improvement of the Programme.

o The Department should be proactive in anticipation of an incoming curricular review.

o The Department should conduct surveys to gauge the academic orientation of the student body.

IV.   Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: **1, 5, 6, 9, 10, and 11.**

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

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

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

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

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname   **Signature**

1. **Professor Dimitrios Triantafyllou (Chair)**
   Kadir Has University, Istanbul, Turkey

2. **Professor Symeon Giannakos**
   Salve Regina University, Newport, Rhode Island, USA

3. **Professor Emeritus Joseph Joseph**
   University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus

4. **Ms. Athina Tsironi, Student**
   Department of Political Science, University of Crete, Rethymno, Greece