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Accreditation Report
for the New Undergraduate Study Programme in
Operation of:
Civil Engineering

Institution: University of Peloponnese
Date: 4 June 2023



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



Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the New Undergraduate Study Programme in operation of **Civil Engineering** of the **University of Peloponnese** 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 **Civil Engineering** of the **University of Peloponnese** comprised the following four (4) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

- 1. Prof. Emeritus Nikolaos Katopodes**
University of Michigan, Michigan, USA (Chair)
- 2. Mr. Charalampos Mygdalis, Civil Engineer**
Technical Chamber of Greece, Athens, Greece
- 3. Prof. Emeritus Panagiotis (Pete) Scarlatos**
Florida Atlantic University, Florida, USA
- 4. Ms. Georgia Tsafaridou, student**
Democritus University of Thrace, Greece

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

In preparation for the visit, the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel (EEAP) reviewed all documents provided by the Hellenic Authority of Higher Education (HAHE), which included background information and guidance on the evaluation/accreditation processes, detailed material and data related to the programme under evaluation, such as the programme accreditation proposal and associated appendices.

The program review was conducted via teleconference (Zoom), organized and coordinated by HAHE with the help of the Department of Civil Engineering, University of Peloponnese. The schedule and agenda of the review were as stated below:

Monday, 29/05/2023:

- Preliminary private meeting of the EEAP. Allocation of tasks and discussion of overall approach.
- Welcome meeting and short overview of the undergraduate programme (UGP) with the vice-Rector/President of MODIP Prof. K. Mavreas, and the Head of the Department Prof. I. Vgenopoulou. This was followed by a presentation of the Department's history, academic profile, current status and future developments, strengths and areas of concern.
- Meeting with MODIP members Profs. K. Mavreas and E. Stathatos, and MODIP staff Mrs. A. Papaporfiriou, OMEA president Assoc. Prof. E. Marinakis, and OMEA members Prof. I. Vgenopoulou, and Assoc. Profs, D-P Kontoni and A. Papalou. Discussion of compliance of the UGP to the quality standards for accreditation, internal procedures, course examinations, review of students' progress, and course/instructor evaluations.
- Private debriefing of the EEAP members only.

Tuesday, 30/05/2023:

- Discussion with teaching faculty members D. Roubien, Asst. Prof., N. Fourniotis, Asst. Prof., D. Biskinis, Asst. Prof., C. Georgouli, Asst. Prof., A. Georgiadi, Lecturer, and D. Lagogianni, Lecturer. The group discussed professional development opportunities, mobility, workload, and student evaluations; competence and adequacy of the faculty to ensure learning outcomes; link between teaching and research; faculty involvement in applied research, projects, and research activities directly related to the programme; possible areas of weakness.
- Discussion with ten current undergraduate students: 2 from 1st year, 2 from 2nd year, 2 from 3rd year and 4 from the 4th year of studies; Discussed student satisfaction from their study experience, and Department/Institution facilities; student input in quality assurance; priority issues concerning student life and welfare.
- On-line tour (video) and discussion of Departmental facilities, such as classrooms, laboratories, faculty and staff offices, secretariat, as well as the University library, and other campus facilities. Participating a) Administrative staff members: E. Chrisikopoulou, Secretariat Head, O. Galani, Secretariat Staff, S. Velentzas, Secretariat

Staff b) Teaching staff members: A. Papalou, Assoc. Prof., N. Fourniotis, Asst. Prof., D. Biskinis, Asst. Prof., C. Georgouli, Asst Prof., A. Georgiadi, Lecturer, and D. Lagogianni, Lecturer. Evaluation of facilities and learning resources to ascertain that the learning materials, equipment, and facilities are adequate for a successful delivery of the program of study.

- Discussion with employers and social partners from both private and public sector:
 - Christina Pefani, Civil Engineer, member of Peterson's Group
 - Iren Karathanasi, DEYAP, Supervisor of the Department Water Management
 - Pantazopoulos Ioannis, Architect, Architectural firm Pantazopoulos
 - Representative, Civil engineer, 3DR
 - Konstantinos Kritsonis, Civil Engineer, Ebocat Technical Company
 - Konstantinos Melas, Mechanical Engineer, Special transportation supervisor at GEK TERNA group of companies
- Private debriefing (EEAP members only). Discussion of findings and assignment of writing parts of the accreditation report draft to the members of the EEAP.
- Closure meeting with the vice-Rector/President of MODIP, Head of the Department, OMEA, and MODIP members and staff. Informal presentation of the EEAP key findings.

Wednesday, 31/05/2023:

- Draft report writing.

Thursday, 01/06/2023:

- Private EEAP members meeting. Further discussion of findings and progress on the accreditation report draft.

Friday, 02/06/2023:

- Private EEAP members meeting.
- Report writing.

Saturday, 03/06/2023:

- Private EEAP members meeting.

Sunday, 04/06/2023:

- EEAP meeting. Review and finalization of the draft report.

Throughout the review and evaluation process, the EEAP was in close communication with the Head of the Department, who was very accommodating in providing additional information, as requested by the EEAP. The EEAP found that OMEA and MODIP personnel, as well as the faculty, students, and staff were eager and helpful in our discussions, providing all additional information requested by the EEAP.

III. New Undergraduate Study Programme in operation Profile

The Department of Civil Engineering belongs to the School of Engineering of the University of Peloponnese and is based in Patras. It comes from the Department of Civil Engineering of the former TEI of Western Greece and has been operating since the academic year 2019-2020 after joining the University of Peloponnese (Law 4610/2019, Government Gazette 70, vol. A, 07.05.2019). With the inclusion in the University of Peloponnese of the School of Technological Applications of the former TEI of Western Greece, as a School of Engineering, the University is attracting new students from all over Greece.

The Department of Civil Engineering of the University of Peloponnese (PAPEL) admits graduates from secondary education programs, who wish to be trained in Civil Engineering, and envision becoming excellent engineers and qualified professionals in order to contribute to a better future for our country. The Department covers the classical field of Civil Engineering in Higher Education, as defined by the international classification of UNESCO (ISCED 2013) in the field 0732 Building and Civil Engineering, in the subcategory Civil Engineering. More specifically, the aforementioned field concerns the study, design and supervision of building structures, bridges, roads, tunnels, stadiums, ports, coastal structures, water treatment facilities, etc. The objective is for graduates of this field to acquire professional competence in subjects such as Structural Engineering, Hydraulics, Road Construction, Traffic Engineering, Geotechnical Engineering, and Architecture.

The mission of the Department is the excellent education of its undergraduate and postgraduate students in the modern methods of the field of Civil Engineering, and the involvement in high-level research. The Programme aims to enable its graduates to integrate professionally into society with knowledge and skills to practice the profession, and to assume the resulting responsibilities.

The faculty members, with the support of the administrative staff and with the assistance of undergraduate and postgraduate students, plan and implement the actions and development of the Department, based on the maximum possible contribution to teaching and research. The basis for achieving these goals is the investment in new knowledge and new technologies, the monitoring of social needs and the maximum possible response to them, and a systematic effort to connect with the labour market and its needs.

The mission of the Department is achieved through: (a) The provision of quality studies in the entire range of subjects of Civil Engineering, (b) The continuous evaluation of the curriculum, (c) The regular evaluation of the results of the training, (d) International outreach (Erasmus programme), and (e) Through research and innovation activities or original basic and applied research programs.

The Department has 10 permanent faculty members, 2 lab technicians, and 3 administrative staff. The number of admitted students per academic year set by the department is 145. According to departmental data, approximately 55% of admitted students had selected the new programme as their 1st or 2nd choice.

The Department occupies an area of 6500 square meters, which includes teaching classrooms, labs, IT centres, and offices. The department provides also a library, cafeteria, restaurant, dormitories, and infirmary services.

The undergraduate program is a five-year study resulting in a Diploma of Civil Engineering. The curriculum includes ten (10) semesters of study, of which eight (8) semesters consist of course instruction only, and the last two semesters involve course work and preparation of a Diploma Thesis. The total number of courses in the curriculum is fifty-nine (59), including the Diploma Thesis. To obtain the Diploma, the student must have successfully passed fifty-four (54) courses and complete a Diploma Thesis. Thus, the student must accumulate three hundred (300) European Credit Transfer System (ECTS) credits, of which two hundred and seventy (270) credits are from coursework, and thirty (30) credits are from the Diploma Thesis.

Student mobility is available and strongly encouraged. The students have the opportunity to participate in practical training or study abroad (Erasmus+).

The EEAP found that the curriculum is extensive but needs further development and restructuring with less focus on Architectural Engineering, and a greater emphasis on areas more closely related to the field and practice of Civil Engineering. The Department, due to the low number of faculty, delivers a general Civil Engineering education with no specialization. The Department prepares graduates for careers in both the private and public sector of the economy. There are strong links to the society, Industry, and administration, both in the Prefecture of Peloponnese and beyond, which are a key priority of the Department.

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 placed 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

a. The academic profile and the mission of the academic unit

Findings

The new Department of Civil Engineering was established in 2019 following the Government's decision to terminate Technical Educational Institutions, and to upgrade them to universities. The Department focused its program on Civil Engineering and developed it to cover the relevant educational and professional needs after reviewing other similar programs in Greece and abroad.

The subject area of the Department is in line with the international categorization of engineering fields in education, as defined in 0732 Building and Civil Engineering category of UNESCO (ISCED 2013).

The mission of the Department was presented to the EEAP by the Vice Rector and the Chair of the department during the first session of the virtual visit – the presentation was included in the documents provided.

The mission of the department is to train its undergraduate and graduate students in the modern methods of Civil Engineering, and to conduct research. The programme aims to make its graduates able to enter the Civil Engineering discipline with knowledge and skills to practice the profession and assume the associated responsibilities. The Department addresses engineering fields such as Architectural Design of Buildings, Static and Dynamic Analysis, e.g., Reinforced Concrete or Steel, Seismic Protection of structures, and the study of Geotechnical, Highway, Transportation, and Hydraulic Problems.

The mission of the Department becomes achievable through:

- (a) The provision of quality studies in the entire spectrum of Civil Engineering topics.
- (b) The continuous evaluation of the curriculum
- (c) Regular evaluation of student learning results
- (d) Internationalization (Erasmus program)
- (e) Innovation activities or original study programs of basic and applied research

The faculty members, with the support of the administrative staff and with the assistance of the undergraduate and postgraduate students, plan and implement the actions and development of the Department based on the maximum possible contribution to teaching and research. The strategy for achieving these goals is based on the investment in new knowledge and new technologies, the monitoring of social needs, and the maximum possible response to them.

Analysis of judgement

The mission of the Department is well articulated in the various documents provided. From discussions with the faculty, it became apparent that they are committed to delivering a program that covers the educational needs of Civil Engineering. The various interactions with

the faculty supported the assessment of their desire and intentions to provide a high-quality program that will properly educate its graduates. However, the coverage of the engineering fields of a strong CE department requires a sufficient number of faculty members for teaching and research, technical personnel for labs, and supportive academic staff. Therefore, delivering a strong undergraduate program and conducting engineering research, which are basic parts of the mission of the department of Civil engineering, requires an increase of the number of faculty and supporting staff beyond the existing level.

Conclusions

The academic profile and the mission of the academic unit are well articulated. However, it should be noted that the transition from a 4- year TEI to a 5- year University in a demanding discipline like CE, with the addition of two intensive levels of study (Master's and PhD's) will require a significant increase in the number of faculty members.

The EEAP has found that the program is partially compliant with this sub-principle.

b. The strategy of the Institution for its academic development

Findings

The Department of Civil Engineering belongs to the Faculty of Engineering of the University of Peloponnese and has its headquarters in Patras. The programme originates from the Department of Civil Engineering of the former TEI of Western Greece and operates from the academic year 2019-2020 after joining the University of Peloponnese.

The University of Peloponnese is the only HEI in the Peloponnese Prefecture. By joining PAPEL, the School of Technological Applications of the former TEI of Western Greece, as a School of Engineering, also covered the city of Patras, the largest in the Peloponnese, thus attracting a larger number of new students.

The Department of Civil Engineering, as an academic unit of the School of Engineering, reinforces the mission and vision of the University of Peloponnese, as articulated in the Institution's Strategic and Operational Development Plan. It is a strong pillar that strengthens the profile of PAPEL by leveraging its position (geographical, economic, educational and research) in the Greek, European and international space.

CE PAPEL has undergone a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis identifying as strengths: a) the fact that >50% of the admitted students list the Department as their first or second choice, b) The covering of the offered positions is through nationwide exams, c) the good quality of teaching and laboratory training, d) means of Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) in teaching and communication with students in the vast majority of courses e) collaborations with foreign Institutions to provide mobility (Erasmus+), f) Provision of Internship for students, and g) the existing building infrastructure in dormitories, laboratories, offices, as well auxiliary spaces, exceeds the needs of the Department.

The weaknesses are a) the unrecognized professional rights of graduates, b) the time-consuming procedures for the renewal of equipment and infrastructure, c) the limited resources to enhance the research profile of Department's faculty members, d) the small number of faculty members and ETEP (high teaching load and administrative work; part of the educational process is covered by non-permanent teaching staff), and e) High Student / Faculty ratio.

A recent study by the Foundation for Economic and Industrial Research (IOBE), which was carried out with the support of the National Council for Infrastructure and Construction (ESBYK), notes the potential development of infrastructure and other construction projects in the coming years. This is a key priority in all official development policy documents in Greece, in fields such as transportation infrastructure, road safety and urban mobility, green development and environmental upgrading, waste management, and energy upgrading of buildings.

The projects will also be supported by the additional European resources of the recovery measures, which will lead to particularly increased funding inflows to Greece for the period 2021-2027. In this context, the University of Peloponnese, in collaboration with the Department of Civil Engineering, intends to play an active role. At the same time, through its research projects, as well as the Erasmus program, the programme is trying to increase its international visibility and develop collaborations with Universities abroad.

The Department of Civil Engineering covers all the offered student positions (145) through Nationwide Examinations and offers a satisfactory quality of teaching. Nevertheless, there are some weak points, which the University of Peloponnese plans to improve through its strategic planning. These points include the understaffing of teaching and administrative positions, as well as the maintenance of the infrastructure.

In summary, the foregoing analysis makes evident the reasons for the University's choosing of the field of Civil Engineering for new Department.

Analysis of judgement

PAPEL has developed a strategy for its academic development, which was provided to EEAP as an attachment. This document outlines the operation of the university and its core principles considering the economic, developmental, and social parameters of the area.

The fact that in the city of Patras, where the new CE department is stationed, there is already a well-established Technical University that produces high-quality educated professionals in the field of Civil Engineering, is a challenge. Considering the perceived weaknesses of a new department, as mentioned to the above findings, it is very likely that the new department will face difficulties in achieving its goals.

On the other hand, the real need for educated civil engineers, due to the upcoming development of infrastructure and other construction projects in Greece, is a major opportunity due to a lack of technical engineers and foremen.

Finally, the threats like a) limited government funding for maintenance and improvement of the department's infrastructure, as well as upgrading the laboratories and teaching facilities; b) the possible reorganization of the national academic plan; c) the non-timely replacement of the positions of retired faculty members inhibits the development of the department.

Conclusions

The EEAP has found that the program is partially compliant with this sub-principle.

c. The documentation of the feasibility of the operation of the department and the study programme

Findings

The feasibility of the operation of the CE Department is justified on the basis of:

(1) The needs of the economy, national and regional

The Department of Civil Engineering aspires to be a dynamic member of the University of Peloponnese in education and research, having a connection with the economy and society, and providing its students with a solid education. The scope of employment for the Civil Engineer is very broad, and generally includes structural, hydraulic and transportation projects.

The significant decrease in the number of new projects observed in the last years in the Region of Western Greece shows a reverse trend with the prospect of increasing activities in the Construction and Infrastructure sector. A recent study by the Foundation for Economic and Industrial Research (IOBE), which was carried out with the support of the National Council for Infrastructure and Construction (ESBYK), outlines that there is going to be development of infrastructure and other construction projects in the coming years. These are key governmental priorities for fields such as transportation infrastructure, road safety and urban mobility, green development and environmental upgrading, waste management, energy upgrading of buildings.

(2) The comparison with other national and international study programs in the same scientific field

There is a total of eight Civil Engineering Departments in Greece, and they cover the broad field of Civil Engineering. Therefore, the operation of the existing Departments covers without

redundancy the professional needs of the country's needs that are constantly growing and adapting to international practices. In the European and international area, many Departments operate in prestigious universities that have in their programs the field of Civil Engineering.

The UGP of the CE Department at PAPEL covers the basic areas of the subject of Civil Engineering, as required by the international practice of national universities and universities abroad. The curriculum includes many mandatory courses in the structural, geotechnical, hydraulic, environmental, and transportation fields. The CE at PAPEL offers 51 compulsory courses, 6 compulsory optional courses, the opportunity for an internship, and a two-semester Diploma Thesis.

(3) The state-of-the-art developments

With the operation of the Department of Civil Engineering, the University of Peloponnese attempts to monitor and contribute to the strengthening of engineering developments in this field, with a modern five-year undergraduate curriculum, in which basic engineering areas of Civil Engineering are covered.

(4) The existing map

The purpose of operating a Department of Civil Engineering in the city of Patras is twofold: First, as a new Department of Civil Engineering in general, and second, regarding its operation in the city of Patras, its contribution to the University of Peloponnese.

The CE Department aims to cover all the necessary knowledge subjects without relying on repetitive topics or unusual specializations, aiming at the connection with the labour market and applied research. CE has also maintained the emphasis on laboratory courses that existed in the previous Department of the TEI of Western Greece, from which it originates. In addition, CE places great emphasis on internships, which not only bring students into contact with the workplace but are also an effective means of finding employment after graduation.

Analysis of judgement

The justification of the feasibility of the operation of the department and the study programme is based on the four pillars mentioned in the findings.

The analysis is as follows:

(1) The needs of the economy, national and regional

There is special reference to the study by the Foundation for Economic and Industrial Research (IOBE). In this study, there is a reference for a substantial development in fields such as transportation infrastructure, road safety and urban mobility, green development and environmental upgrading, waste management, energy upgrading of buildings. Examining the curriculum of the Department, we can state that there is a deficiency in covering these fields in depth.

Also, the fact that in the city of Patras, where the new CE department is stationed, there is already a well-established Engineering School that produces well-qualified professionals in the field of Civil Engineering is a drawback. It is unlikely that the new department will play a leadership role locally or nationally.

(2) The comparison with other national and international study programs in the same scientific field

There are five existing accredited Civil Engineering Departments in Greece, which cover the broad field of Civil Engineering. It is not certain that there will be a need for more civil engineers in the future, as during the previous decade many Greek civil engineers looked for work abroad, due to the applied economic austerity measures.

(3) The state-of-the-art developments

The department has presently one research project, the faculty numbers are low, and the instructors are involved in many administrative activities. Therefore, it is unlikely that the research program will grow.

(4) The existing academic map

It is definitely positive that all the offered student positions (145) are covered, which strengthens the feasibility of the operation.

Conclusions

The EEAP finds that the program is partially compliant with this sub-principle. For the sustainability of the program, the Department is strongly encouraged to develop a strategic plan and identify an area that it could focus on, in order to become competitive with other Civil Engineering departments in Greece and attract students. Moreover, development of an immediate plan for how to address the limited number of faculty may be essential.

d. The documentation of the sustainability of the new department

Findings

The Department has sufficient facilities for the realization of the theoretical and laboratory courses of the Study Program. More specifically, CEE PAPEL has a two-story building with seven (7) large classrooms, two (2) computer centres and nine (9) laboratories. They are equipped with a modest number of instruments, as well as relevant software.

The academic staff consists of 10 faculty members in the ranks: professor (1), associate professor (3), assistant professor (4), and lecturer (2). There are also 2 ETEP members. Recently, 2 faculty member positions at the level of assistant professor have been filled, with 2 more following in the fall semester of the academic year 2023-24. As of today, none of the faculty members are expected to retire in the near future.

Every year, temporary faculty members are hired, either with PD 470/80 or within the framework of the act "Acquiring Academic Teaching Experience for Young Scientists with PhDs", which covers all the remaining teaching needs of the Department. Especially for the academic staff, there is a commitment of the Faculty of Engineering and the Institution for the filling of the necessary faculty positions over a five-year period, according to a specific timetable, so that the entire teaching program is fully covered.

In the current phase, the Department's financial resources come from the State Budget. In the year 2020, €20,873 was allocated to the Department of Civil Engineering from the Regular Budget, and €39,151 in 2021. Additionally, the Department utilizes the funding opportunities resulting from networking in the fields of research, and technological development and innovation. Other funding is secured from Sectoral and Regional Operational Programs, and execution of design studies and projects. Finally, starting with the current academic semester, the Department operates a postgraduate study program, which can potentially contribute to the resources of the Department.

The Department's work is supported by its Secretariat, the University Library, the Department of Studies and Student Affairs, the Internship Office, the Erasmus Office, the Student Housing Committee, the IT Department, the operation of electronic services, such as the Electronic Secretariat, the e-class platform, and the Student Restaurant and Canteen.

Analysis of judgement

The current facilities are adequate for delivering the educational mission of the Department. Most of the current labs are equipped to address the educational needs of the courses offered, but they are lacking components that could facilitate and augment potential research efforts. Another obstacle to the full exploitation of the labs is the lack of technical personnel. Therefore, a critical review of the future needs aiming to increase research productivity is essential. An added benefit of having well-functioning labs will be the ability to offer services for a fee to external public and private groups, and thus allow for an additional revenue source. As for all other public Greek universities, the funding comes from the government, and as such there is a need to clearly identify and demonstrate the Department's needs in order to be able to compete with other universities and similar departments when new faculty positions are authorized. Therefore, the effort that has been made to increase funding from local sources using collaborative activities with industry and governmental agencies is in the right direction. This would be achieved easier once additional staff is hired to provide relief from educational duties and allow for a more systematic effort in approaching such entities and developing partnerships.

The sustainability of the Department hinges on the balance of two competing factors. The first is the great need to increase the faculty and staff in order to deliver the academic component of the program while increasing research productivity, which is a crucial issue for any 5-year engineering Department. The second is the fact that all the student positions are filled, which

ensures the viability of the teaching program. Therefore, the number of faculty must increase significantly in the long term, if the quality of the program is to be maintained. Furthermore, in order to continue successfully in the near future, the department must resolve the issue of stagnant students who represent a major sink of the Department's resources.

Conclusions

The EEAP has found that the program is partially compliant with this sub-principle. The facilities are adequate for the program, and its faculty is burdened with an enormous workload, which could be considered above and beyond normal faculty levels. However, the sustainability of the Department depends on increasing the number of faculty, equipping current laboratories to become research-ready, and possibly used to facilitate external groups' requests, thus providing them with new revenue opportunities.

e. The structure of studies

Findings

The Curriculum, i.e., the Study Program (SP) contains the titles of compulsory and elective courses and their weekly teaching hours, which include lectures and laboratory exercises.

The SP is organized based on the ECTS European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System. Each semester corresponds to 30 ECTS credits. The total number of PPS courses is 59, including the Thesis and Internship. Of these, 52 are compulsory courses and 7 are technical electives. To obtain the diploma, the student must successfully complete 55 courses (including the Diploma Thesis with 30 ECTS), which correspond to a total of 300 ECTS credits. In conclusion, the courses are properly aligned with ECTS.

The learning process in the Department of Civil Engineering seeks to strengthen its student-centred character both through teaching, and by the evaluation of student performance. Specifically: (a) The participation of students in the teaching process is strongly supported, and the formulation of questions by the students is encouraged. (b) Laboratory courses allow students to acquire skills for the practical application of theoretical concepts. (c) The lecturers consider the different needs and backgrounds of the students (graduates of general or technical high schools, foreign students, vulnerable groups), adapting teaching and assessment methods accordingly. (d) The development of critical thinking by the students is enhanced by the realization and presentation of individual and/or group assignments. (e) The systematic use of the Electronic Class (e-class) assures the efficient notification of the students regarding the courses, their requirements, the teaching methods, the evaluation method and criteria, and the posting of assignments and supplementary teaching materials. (f) Students are informed by the lecturers about performance evaluation methods and are encouraged to examine their examination papers and improve on their weaknesses. (g) Students can meet

with the instructors in their offices or online, during specific office hours or at another time by appointment, and discuss questions related to their courses. (h) Students are encouraged to express their observations regarding the applied pedagogical methods, the difficulties they encounter, as well as suggestions for their improvement. (i) Students with special health problems or disabilities are given the possibility of alternative assessment methods (oral examination, use of multiple-choice questions, etc.) while respecting their personal data. (j) Students evaluate the courses through questionnaires. This process is supported by the integrated information system of MODIP of the University of Peloponnese.

Upon completion of their studies, the Department of Civil Engineering expects that its graduates will be equipped with the necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities, which ensure their academic and professional recognition. In particular, the graduates of the Department:

(A) Acquire knowledge; specifically: a) Have a coherent and integrated body of knowledge, which includes elements from scientific and other developments in the field of Civil Engineering. b) Have the knowledge to prepare Civil Engineering design projects.

(B) Acquire skills; namely: a) To analyse and adapt through practical examples their acquired knowledge, in order to apply it to various areas of the engineering field of study or the professional field, as well as to acquire new knowledge. b) To correctly apply the appropriate tools and the appropriate analysis techniques to the investigation of the main issues of their engineering field of study. c) To solve complex or new problems of their engineering field of study, developing comprehensive as well as creative or innovative solutions and approaches, while at the same time supporting their solutions and opinions in a methodical and scientific manner. d) To use scientific sources or sources specialized in theoretical, technical, and professional matters, to gather, analyse and select in a critical and responsible manner the ideas and information for those elements that concern them.

(C) To acquire abilities; namely: a) To plan, manage and implement supervised research projects in the context of their engineering field of study, both individually and collectively. b) To transfer the knowledge and skills acquired in a professional or business context and apply them autonomously, and in a manner that shows professionalism and social responsibility, so as to design and manage complex techniques, or professional activities, or tasks. c) To make decisions, evaluate them, and assume their responsibility in complex professional and business contexts.

The study programme was designed in such a way as to follow the basic criteria of other accredited engineering programs. Specifically:

- It consists of five years of study and a Diploma Thesis of two semesters.
- The content of studies and the title of the diploma correspond to the basic specialty of Civil Engineering.
- It includes courses that ensure the foundation in the basic sciences, the development, deepening, and consolidation at a high level of knowledge in the scope of the subject of the Civil Engineering specialty, the acquisition of knowledge in the methodology of problem solving, the methodology of analysis, synthesis and system and application design, and the development of research capabilities.

Analysis of judgement

The present state of the programme, since its creation in 2019, does not allow for evaluating the knowledge, skill, and competency of its graduates since there are currently no graduates. However, the programme expects to keep up with other Civil Engineering programs.

As noted in sub-principle 1.d, the issue of professional engineering status of the graduates has not yet been resolved, and as such it can become a challenge for the program.

The fact that there are no specializations in the programme can be interpreted in two different ways. The programme cannot produce a graduate with deeper understanding of a distinct area of specialization, who is ready to work in the specific field. On the other hand, the programme can focus on educating a well-rounded professional engineer who can have a generalist approach to all civil engineering areas. The last option is perhaps justified because of the low number of faculty members, and additional demands that the 5-years course will place on the faculty.

Another issue that has not been discussed is the background level of the students entering the Department, who do not have a strong foundation in science and mathematics. This could create issues with course delivery, e.g., requiring spending more time to address basic mathematics and physics, and may discourage better-prepared students from attending lectures, thus obstructing the learning process and the learning outcomes.

Conclusions

The EEAP has found that the program is partially compliant with this sub-principle. The faculty is commendable for their efforts to deliver the program in its entirety. However, to ensure the continued and full delivery of the program, the faculty needs to re-examine the programme study, decreasing courses that are outside the core area of Civil Engineering while examining the need for offering remedial or tutorial classes for students who need support.

f. The number of admitted students

Findings

During each academic year, the number of students admitted to CE PAPEL was determined by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, following a proposal by the CE Department and PAPEL. Specifically, for the years 2019-2020, 2020-2021, 2021-2022, and 2022-2023, the numbers were as follows:

Academic Year	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Number of admissions	145	145	145	145

With the transition to the University of Peloponnese, the Department continues to fill all the offered positions for students, as evidenced by the recent admissions data for the academic years mentioned in the table above. In a 5-year perspective, it proposed no to change the number of admissions. The Civil Engineering Departments with the right to transfer from and to the Department are the ones of the University of Western Attica and the International University of Greece.

Analysis of judgement

The anticipated number of students is considered high given the personnel resources of the Department.

The requirements of a five-year CE department, whose purpose is to produce qualified civil engineers, and the expected granting of professional rights, are higher than those of a four-year study course. It may be necessary to reduce the number of admissions, and to focus on the quality and coherence of the studies.

Conclusions

The EEAP has found that the program is partially compliant with this sub-principle.

The need to increase the number of faculty and to reduce the number of admitted students is further emphasized.

g. Postgraduate studies and research

Findings

The academic unit plans to offer:

- A Master's Program (maximum admission number: 20 students).
- A Doctoral Studies Program (5 PhD candidates).

Also, there are scientific collaborations of faculty members with the:

- Department of Mechanical Engineering, University of Peloponnese.
- Domestic institutions (University of Patras, Academy of Athens, Technical University of Crete).
- Universities of other countries (England, Canada, China, Iran).
- Applied research project funded by the Western Region of Greece ("Investigation of the hydraulic behaviour and proposals for its regulation of the hydrodynamic system of Trichonida - Lysimachia lakes, in the West Greece" - K.A. 80619, Total Budget: €189,500.00).

In the last 5 years there have been 67 publications in international peer-reviewed journals and 783 cross-references according to Scopus.

Analysis of Judgement

The research productivity and publication record of the faculty is rather low, due primarily to the heavy teaching loads and administrative efforts, coupled with the lack of new and competitive faculty entries. Furthermore, the attendance at scientific conferences in Greece or abroad is very limited, which makes research rather difficult in terms of new ideas and innovative methods.

Conclusions

The EEAP has found that the program is partially compliant with this sub-principle.

Given the size of the faculty and the resources required for delivering a graduate and doctoral program, it is advisable that the Department focus on delivering its main, 5-year program, and then when the faculty numbers increase to reconsider the feasibility of any other programs.

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	
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	X
Non-compliant	
b. The strategy of the Institution for its academic development	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	X
Non-compliant	
c. The documentation of the feasibility of the operation of the department and the study programme	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	X
Non-compliant	
d. The documentation of the sustainability of the new department	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	X
Non-compliant	
e. The structure of studies	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	X
Non-compliant	
f. The number of admitted students	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	X
Non-compliant	
g. Postgraduate studies	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	X
Non-compliant	

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

Panel Recommendations

- The Department needs to revisit and revise their strategic plan to address long- and intermediate-term issues, such as what happens if no new faculty are hired. It is essential to identify priority areas to meet both teaching and research needs. The identification of a niche area could help in identifying such priority areas.
- There is a need for organized remedial courses to address students are not fully prepared for the university courses.
- The need to motivate students to go for service-learning projects is decisive for increasing the interactions of the faculty with local agencies and industry in order to promote continued collaboration.
- The facilities need to be reviewed with an eye on research, and equipped appropriately, so they would further promote faculty research as well as potentially become funding sources for external work.

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

Findings

The University of Peloponnese has developed a comprehensive plan for quality assurance according to a well-documented policy. The department of Civil Engineering has adopted the quality assurance policy of the University and has developed additional measures that reflect the mission of the Civil Engineering profession by using information provided by the Department's constituents. Emphasis is placed on increasing the level of research activity according to social and market needs, recognition of students and faculty members for high achievement, and enhancing the visibility of the Department at the national and international level.

The EEAP met with members of MODIP and discussed its methods for quality assurance and the enforcement of its plans. It is evident that MODIP collects detailed data related to each academic program, including the number of students registered, student evaluations, research activities, and student support services. The data are processed, and a variety of statistical measures is made available to the departmental administration and its faculty. There is a commitment to repeat the process on an annual basis.

The target values of the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) established by MODIP are relatively low. However, even these low targets have not been met, which indicates that additional structural modifications are necessary for the success of the program.

Analysis of judgement

The Civil Engineering course evaluation questionnaires are straightforward and cover most aspects of the courses in the program of study. There is a well-designed process for the timing and completion of the evaluations, and the student participation rates are high. The evaluation results reveal strong agreement that the teaching faculty is genuinely dedicated to a high quality of education. The availability of the faculty is exceptional, and the response to student concerns is greatly appreciated. During the meeting of the EEAP with the students, this high approval rate of the teaching staff was confirmed. It is clear that the faculty is respected by the students, and the approach to teaching and learning has created a strong bond between teachers and students. Of course, this is a new program with many of its policies in transition, therefore it is important to maintain the present quality standards in teaching. Considering the relatively small number of tenured and tenure-track faculty in the Department, this may be a challenging issue. The current quality of the program is achieved by a major effort and exceptional dedication of the faculty. However, the teaching loads are not sustainable, if research activity and service to the community and Nation are to remain among the goals of the Department. Career advancement, involvement in large research projects, and mentoring of doctoral students will require additional resources that the government will have to make available to the CE Department at the University of Peloponnese.

Regarding the setting and success of meeting the KPI established by MODIP, the EEAP found that improved streamlining of the curriculum would substantially improve the present conditions.

Conclusions

The EEAP established that there is substantially compliant with the initial stage of application of Principle 2.

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

The EEAP recommends that:

- The University of Peloponnese request additional faculty for the CE Department. This is a critical issue for maintaining the quality and achieving the goals of the CE Department.
- The proposed industry council be formed as soon as possible, and its input be incorporated in the quality assurance process.
- The planned recognitions and awards for students and faculty be started as soon as possible by seeking the support of the industrial council.
- CE Initiate an informal recommendation and assistance to the students to follow course prerequisite requirements, create special review sessions prior to examinations, form study groups, and introduce remedial courses for no credit.

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 organization, 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, labor 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

Findings

The new 5-year civil engineering program was developed based on the existing civil engineering programs of other engineering schools in Greece with several elements kept from their previous program as a Technological Institute. As such, the structure of the program is relatively complete in terms of courses (core and electives) including courses dedicated to the acquisition of digital skills. The program was developed by faculty members with the participation of students and was approved by the relevant PAPEL committees. The objectives, the expected learning outcomes, and the intended professional qualifications have been included in the program design, whereas the details of the program structure, along with the course outlines and information about the teaching staff, have been published in the Student Guide, as required.

The present curriculum prepares graduates to apply knowledge of mathematics through differential equations, and calculus-based physics. However, additional areas of basic science are needed to provide the necessary breadth for a complete mastery of civil engineering.

The curriculum does not include principles of sustainability in design, project management, basic concepts of business and economics, transportation, construction management, public policy and leadership, and issues in professional ethics.

There are no specific course directions leading to a specialization similar to other Engineering Schools. Students are asked to select from a very limited number of elective courses according to their preferences, without following an organized course structure.

It is positive that the programme provides work experience opportunities to students in the 8th or 9th semester. Students can choose instead of a course a practical experience at governmental and industrial entities. The subject of the internship is related to the areas of Civil Engineering. This gives students the opportunity for work experience and prepares them for the labour market.

It is noted that the internal procedures for continuously assessing the effectiveness of the curriculum and teaching are repeated yearly, and the restructuring of the curriculum is done every 5 years. Input from critical constituencies and important stakeholders (such as TCG), or external experts, who can provide advice on how the graduates can meet the stated mission and/or educational objectives, is not solicited routinely and systematically. This lack of critical assessment and feedback can limit the ability of the curriculum to keep up with the latest developments and needs in the field. In fact, it was not clear to the EEAP what the institutional strategy for ascertaining alignment is, only that there is an intention to establish a committee of experts.

Analysis of judgement

The Civil Engineering Diploma program at PAPEL was based on other engineering programs in Greece and has not considered the scale difference in terms of number of students, available resources, and number of faculty members regarding, particularly, their workload. In addition, there was an opportunity to differentiate the concentrations offered by the new program, potentially offering the possibility of reducing their number and/or replacing some of them by a new direction attractive to several students who could come to PAPEL just to take advantage of this opportunity, which would have been unavailable elsewhere in the country. In addition, some special consideration can be made in transforming some prerequisite courses to co-requisites to assist the progress of students through the academic semesters without sacrificing the quality of the program with its well thought parameters. Attention should also be paid to the establishment of more systematic tutorials for some analysis and design courses, in which students can receive additional assistance to enhance the lecture material and apply it to the solution of problems.

Conclusions

The number of faculty in each specialization area is very low when considering the teaching and supervision workload. The faculty's teaching load is considered by the EEAP as significantly high. In addition to the needs related to the 300 ECTS Integrated Master programme, the faculty must supervise the completion of final diploma theses (written) and lectures, which is a considerable teaching load that is added to the teaching of the courses.

Given the heavy teaching load for all teaching faculty, the programme's research productivity cannot flourish. Presently, systematic, and formally framed research activity is limited in general, with only few academic faculty being research active.

The standards of the academic program, the enthusiastic dedication, the quality of the teaching faculty, and the laboratory facilities, are clearly at a good level. In addition, the positive evaluation expressed by the students adds to the strength of the programme. However, its continuing successful delivery might become problematic without the provision of substantial resources in terms of academic positions and laboratory equipment.

The EEAP believes that this is a programme that fulfils the credit (ECTS) requirements for the Diploma of Civil Engineer. Therefore, the design, approval, and monitoring of the new undergraduate program in Civil Engineering of PAPEL is partially compliant with the requirements of Principle 3.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Establish the requirement for students to promote a practical engineering experience. Re-examine the course sequence in terms of prerequisite and co-requisite course structure. Given that underprepared students in science and mathematics can be admitted to the department, some compulsory prerequisite courses are considered necessary to be integrated into the curriculum.
- Pursue further opportunities for students to gain additional experiences in integrated civil engineering. The lack of specialties in the programme, can be used as an advantage to create a generalist approach that connects several of the CE specialties. For example, urban design that improves traffic conditions while allowing quick evacuation during extreme events.
- Establish formal tutorials (i.e., outside of the lectures) in several basic courses to assist the students to obtain the necessary knowledge on the course topic.
- In the long term, reconsider the size of the program and proceed with the re-thinking and the possible creation of the four concentration areas of the program.
- Establish a systematic framework (by appointing an administrative assistant) to obtain a practical engineering experience either in Greece or abroad.
- Consider the introduction of courses in project management, sustainability in design, basic business and economics, transportation, construction management, public policy and leadership, and issues in professional ethics.

Principle 4: Student-centered 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

Findings

The EEAP found clear evidence that student-centred learning, teaching, and assessment is the central mission of the CE department. The faculty members use various approaches to attract and maintain the attention of the students by means of lectures, laboratory demonstrations, group projects, etc. An academic advisor is assigned to all students and follows their program of study for the duration of their tenure at PAPEL.

The EEAP found that there is a strong collaboration between teachers and students. It should be noted, however, that the group of students that participated in the interview consisted of students ranking high in the class. In particular, students indicated that they have unlimited access to the faculty, and that the support they receive is excellent. Most remarkable was the fact that the department chair was the most highly respected teacher for upper division classes, and the mathematics instructor was unanimously the most effective in lower division classes. In general, this student sample described a teaching and learning environment that is delivering the expected outcomes of the programme in perfect harmony. Finally, during the meeting with the employers of recent graduates, the entirety of the participants indicated that they were very satisfied with the technical knowledge of the programme's graduates. They

emphasized that they would hire again civil engineers from the University of Peloponnese without hesitation.

Analysis of judgement

The coverage of the material offered in the curriculum is both broad and deep. Course syllabi, textbook selection, and grading policy are clear and easy to follow. Student attendance is excellent, and participation in class evaluations is exemplary. Student assessment is performed in accordance with the programme's policies, which are published in advance, and are available in the courses' syllabi.

During the interview with the EEAP, the students indicated that there is a clear process for challenging a grade, getting access to exam papers, and voicing concerns about a variety of issues. There are no teaching assistants or graders, however, which makes the workload of the faculty even higher. At the same time, this has allowed unlimited contact between teachers and students, and helped develop a rapport, which is outstanding.

Conclusions

The EEAP finds that, despite the small number of teaching faculty, the undergraduate program in the Department of Civil Engineering at the University of Peloponnese is effective in delivering a student-centred programme. There exists a mutual respect between the students and the faculty, which reveals a high dedication by both parties. Students are motivated to learn and seem to believe in the mission of the field of study that they have chosen.

The Chair of the Department is a tireless individual that practically lives for the well-being of the undergraduate students. The same seems true for all of the faculty members that the EEAP had an opportunity to interview, which is very encouraging for the continuing quality of the programme. It cannot be over-emphasized, however, that the department needs additional faculty in all academic ranks. If this and other resources are made available, this has the potential to become a premier programme for undergraduate Civil Engineering education.

The EEAP finds that CE-PAPEL is fully compliant with Principle 4.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

For the continuing improvement of the student-centred learning experience, the EEAP recommends that the programme should:

- Reform the mathematics sequence to address the needs of engineering applications by introducing case studies from upper division classes, such as fluid and solid mechanics.
- Invite leaders of local industry to teach special topics during the semester. This will expose the students to real, large-scale projects, and further enhance the partnerships of the faculty with local agencies and industry.
- Invite underperforming students to participate in the interviews with the EEAP. Although top students offer a view of the benefits of academic excellence, academic success often leads to forgiveness of minor flaws in the programme. A struggling student on the other hand, approaches matters more critically, thus a fair representation of all students will help evaluate the programme more accurately.

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

Findings

At the beginning of each academic year, the department organizes a welcoming event for the new students. During this event, students are given the opportunity to meet with the Department's Chair, faculty members, secretarial staff, and other classmates. At the event, students are also informed of the following:

- The programme's specifics and structure
- Professional and employment opportunities of the programme's graduates
- Study Guide
- Laboratories, research activities, and opportunities to participate in them.
- Laboratory courses, rules and practices that govern them.
- Procedural part of studies: Deadlines, transactions with the Secretariat, right to address complaints, meals/accommodation, and
- Student Clubs and venues of student support and representation.

Student support is facilitated through utilization of information and communication technologies (ICT). Thus, information is shared via e-mail and announcements on the website of the Department. In addition, student progress is monitored through:

- The academic advisor, a faculty member assigned to mentor each student from the beginning of studies until graduation.
- The collection and analysis of quantitative and qualitative statistical data per course for critical indicators, such as student participation/success in exams, distribution of grades of each course, and aggregate data, e.g., number of graduates and their Diploma grade.

Preparation of a Diploma Thesis is compulsory. The Thesis is examined by a three-member Examination Committee, in which the Supervisor of the Diploma Thesis participates. The topic of the Diploma Thesis is proposed by the professor and finalized in collaboration with the student. After graduation, in addition to the Diploma, there is an issuance of a Diploma Supplement in both Greek and English free of charge.

The student has the option to participate in Practical Training, including the Erasmus, for credit. This way the students have the opportunity to apply their theoretical knowledge to practical applications. Practical Training involves one or more of the following activities: (a) searching, analysing and synthesizing data and information, (b) adapting to new situations, and enhancing decision-making, (c) autonomous or teamwork and working in an interdisciplinary environment, (d) designing and managing projects, (e) promoting free, creative and inductive thinking.

The Department has moved forward by strengthening the curriculum beyond what is offered in the classroom, promoting experiences abroad through the Erasmus+ program. Also, recent graduates in their first year of graduation can move for internships, provided that a) their application has been approved and submitted while they are students in their final year, and b) the Learning Agreement for Placement is completed while they retain their student status. Students can move for studies or internships in all cycles of study, a total of 12 months in each cycle of study. Also, Erasmus+ gives the opportunity to the Teaching and Administrative staff of Higher Education Institutions to move respectively for teaching and training in institutions abroad.

Analysis of Judgement

The analysis of Principle 5 is based on the following:

- Review of the documents provided by HAHE
- Presentations by OMEA and MODIP
- Discussions with the department Chair and the faculty members
- Discussion with the students
- Discussion with potential employers

Conclusions

- The Department of Civil Engineering of the School of Engineering at the University of Peloponnese, within the framework of its mission, is educating students to become well-rounded Civil Engineers that will support the expected needs in this engineering area, locally and throughout Greece.
- The Undergraduate Program of Studies of the Department of Civil Engineering hopes to achieve recognition abroad, as graduates of the Department are accepted by institutions abroad for graduate studies.
- Overall, the programme offers high quality education and enjoys the support of the local industry.

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

Academic research opportunities for the students are very limited. Although the programme is now operational, in the long run additional faculty members with traditional civil engineering specializations would be needed for departmental growth and sustainability.

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 specializations, 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 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.

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

Findings

The faculty members of the Department usually undertake the teaching of four (4) or five (5) semester courses per year. Thus, the majority of the faculty members of the Department have at least an 8 hours/week teaching load. In addition, a significant number of faculty members have a higher teaching load (over 9 hours/week), taking into account courses being taught in the Postgraduate Program of the Department that has started in the Spring Semester of 2022. Due to the attractiveness of the programme (145 new students every year) versus the small number of faculty members (10), the current student/faculty enrolment ratio is 45/1, and this ratio is expected to grow. Fortunately, two new faculty positions have already been advertised in the department.

The Department fully complies with the pertinent Greek legislation for the recruitment of new faculty members and the development and promotion of the existing teaching staff. The students' evaluation reports are taken into account, especially in the development and

promotion process of the teaching faculty. In conjunction with the course evaluations conducted before the beginning of the examination period, the faculty is evaluated by the students every semester.

The students' connection between teaching and research is implemented mainly through the completion of their Diploma Thesis, typically carried out in the last two semesters. The faculty are motivated to engage in research activities. However, the research productivity of the department is low overall, and not uniformly distributed. In addition, the Department has not yet defined a research strategy focusing on any specific area.

Noting the importance of faculty excellence recognition, PAPEL by the decision of 7/31.07.2017 of the 100th session of the Senate established the award "Teaching Excellence at the University Peloponnese", which is granted to a regular member of the teaching faculty. The award is very competitive and is merit based.

Analysis of Judgement

The EEAP made their recommendations after critically reviewing the documentations provided by HAHE, MODIP, OMEA, as well as after the discussions with the department's Chair and faculty members.

Conclusions

The faculty members are working hard to provide quality education. Their teaching and student mentoring is highly regarded. However, the teaching load is too heavy, and not sustainable. The current overall research output of the Department is significantly below that of other, similar Departments in Greece and Europe. This can be remedied by increasing the number of tenure-track faculty, which will reduce the teaching load and allow the faculty to pursue further research activities. In summary, the EEAP finds that the programme is partially compliant with this principle.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The EEAP believes that for the long run the programme needs to undertake the following actions:

- Increase the number of faculty members in order to increase research activity and production of research work in the Department, and at the same time to reduce the teaching load of faculty members.
- Increase the number of non-tenure track members of the teaching staff in order to further reduce the teaching load.
- Continuous maintenance and improvement of equipment of the Laboratories with advanced instruments and modern software.
- Development of Applied Research, through the formulation of proposals for undertaking National and European projects.
- Provide incentives and support which can lead to development of researchers and a higher research output, as follows:
 - a. rotating sabbaticals,
 - b. regular research seminars with internal and external speakers,
 - c. mentoring of junior researchers,
 - d. attendance of national and international conferences,
 - e. participation in research training workshops,
 - f. participation in external research proposal evaluations,
 - g. participation in journal editorial boards, etc.

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-centered learning and the adoption of flexible modes of learning and teaching. Support activities and facilities may be organized 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

Findings

The new program has a number of laboratories that were carried over from the previous Civil Engineering TEI program. Namely, there are the following well-equipped and functional laboratories:

- Two (2) computer centres
- Two (2) drawing boards
- One (1) building materials technology laboratory
- One (1) surveying laboratory
- One (1) road construction workshop
- One (1) reinforced concrete workshop

- One (1) soil mechanics laboratory
- One (1) interdepartmental fluid mechanics laboratory
- One (1) interdepartmental endurance laboratory
- One (1) structural control research laboratory with seismic

There are even (7) classrooms (two have a capacity of 100 people) and two (2) interdepartmental auditoria which cover very adequately the lecture needs.

Many IT services are readily available, i.e., Electronic Secretariat, Academic ID, E-mail, Asynchronous training, Textbook supply, Access to office and collaboration applications (DELOS).

The labs and IT services are supported by

- Twelve, (10) + (2) advertised, faculty members
- One (1) professor emeritus
- One (2) faculty member from the Department of Mechanical Engineering
- Two (2) Special Technical Staff members
- Seven (7) contract lecturers (Adjunct Lecturers and personnel from the Academic Teaching Experience program) and
- Three (3) secretarial support members.

Students enjoy a wide range of functional support services, i.e., Subsistence, Accommodation (student residence), Health care, Student Counselling and Psychological Support Structure – “WeCare” (funded by National and European resources), and Liaison Office. The students are informed about the above services during their freshman orientation event while all pertinent information is readily available in the Department’s website.

Analysis of Judgement

The above information is based mainly on the internal quality assurance report, MODIP and QMEA presentations, and the interviews of the EEAP with faculty, staff, and students.

Conclusions

The programme still relies on the support of some faculty members from the old TEI program, whose expertise is not in the core of Civil Engineering education. As a result, there is a need to strengthen the programme’s offerings in fundamental subjects of engineering research and practice. The EAAP finds the programme is fully compliant with this principle.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The new program needs to strengthen the Civil Engineering component even if that means reduction and de-emphasizing of some of its former TEI Architectural legacy. Also, PAPEL needs to increase the effort for new faculty hirings, as needed.

Principle 8: Collection, Analysis and Use of Information for the Organization 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

Findings

The University's MODIP has established the necessary monitoring procedures for each department. MODIP collects data on student population, performance indicators, faculty, and the study program. The department's OMEA is responsible for collecting data and ensuring the quality of the UGP. With these data, they are able to identify weak areas in order to improve the study program.

Course feedback is collected at the end of each semester (between the 7th and 10th week) through a questionnaire that assesses the teaching staff, their teaching methodology and materials used, the effort they put, and the level of course difficulty. The questionnaires are structured, conducted online, and analysed by MODIP. Afterwards, the faculty can access electronically the results for their courses. The students complete the questionnaire before or after the lecture in order for the department to ensure a higher participation rate.

Students have individual access to the institute's online platforms (e-students, e-class). They can track their progress online, request basic documentation, and access their online class for notes and homework. Eventually, the data is uploaded to the national database of NISQA, which can be accessed by every MODIP in Greece.

An annual internal evaluation is conducted, and the department presents its findings, and identifies weak and strong areas of the undergraduate program in order to improve them the

following year. It was also noted that the faculty plans to collect information during the semesters, so they can proceed with the changes as soon as possible.

Analysis of Judgement

The findings were based on a critical review of documents provided by HAHE, the presentations of OMEA and MODIP, and discussions with the Department Chair, faculty, and students.

Conclusion

The institution has established the appropriate procedures to collect and analyse the available data with the intention to ensure its proper function and growth. The EAAP finds the programme is fully compliant with this principle.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The EEAP has no recommendations on principle 8.

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

Findings

The department's website (<https://civil.uop.gr>) is comprehensive and well indexed. Information regarding the staff members and their curriculum vitae, research programs, and the policy for quality assurance are provided both in English and Greek, while the history, student's guide, news and events are only in Greek.

The Department's Secretariat office offers another venue for access of news and events, and information regarding the programme to students, constituents, and the public in general.

Analysis of Judgement

The course outlines (part of the student's guide pdf in the Greek version) are detailed and state clearly the learning outcomes, syllabus, teaching and learning methods, performance evaluation and bibliography, while the majority of them link to the online class.

Maps and contact details regarding the location of the department are available online, but other information of practical use (e.g., accommodation, public transport) is missing.

The website only states the Department's infrastructure, and there are no details about the labs' equipment, library operation, cultural activities, and the layout of the campus.

There is no other social media page linked to the department, except from a YouTube video that offers a good introduction and overview of the campus and its buildings.

Conclusion

The website is easy to navigate and up to date for all relevant information needed. The EAAP finds the programme is fully compliant with this principle.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The EEAP recommends the programme should.

- Establish an active social media presence to promote the department.
- Add more information to the English version.
- Add information of practical use for students and visitors.

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

Findings

There is a regular monitoring effort facilitated through the collection of annual data by the Department with student assessments and reports. The data collected is utilized by the OMEA of the Department for the assessment of:

- Equitable distribution of courses in the UGP,
- Student workload,
- Level of student satisfaction with learning outcomes,
- Faculty members and student relations.

In addition, a discussion at the General Assembly of the Department is made for:

- The positive elements to be highlighted,
- Corrective actions to be taken for the negative points.

The continuous interaction with the student organizations ensures that the grievance handling mechanism and Academic advisor are in the right direction.

The course evaluations are on par with other similar surveys, and cover adequately the various aspects of the course, as well as other academic activities. Summaries that are provided to the faculty with the results of these evaluations have been provided as part of the OMEA presentation.

Analysis of judgement

The internal review of the Department indicates that there is an effort to revisit the programme and modernize it to reflect current scientific trends while adjusting it to address the realistic abilities of the program, the issues with the background level of the students, and changing societal needs.

Students have indicated that there is a close relationship between them and the faculty, and they feel comfortable discussing course aspects and problems with them directly.

There is a need for systematic and continuous review of the study program to ensure that the Department responds to the challenges at hand and identifies actionable paths to verify that it develops its identity. In this respect, there is a need for the Department to develop a questionnaire to be distributed to industry and public agencies to identify new trends and evolving market needs of the industry.

The Department should consider the development of an Advisory Board to seek the input of employers and professional associations to ensure an updated view of the profession and develop graduates that are better prepared to enter the workforce. The Board would work with the Department to provide feedback on educational and market aspects.

The Department should consider the development of a survey of its graduates after the academic year 2024-2025 to obtain a program evaluation and identify potential areas of improvement. This would provide an opportunity to students to reflect on their knowledge gained and identify potential areas of changes.

Conclusions

The EEAP finds the Department fully compliant with this principle.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The EEAP recommends that the CE Department should:

- Consider developing a separate questionnaire for graduating students to be conducted in the 10th semester to collect information regarding their perspectives of the program and the Department.
- Develop a survey targeting public and private sectors regarding required skills and knowledge of graduates as well as the impact of the Department and its research on the local society.
- Establish an Advisory Board to help the Department in improving the program.

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

Findings

This external evaluation of the undergraduate programme in Civil Engineering of the University of Peloponnese is the first ever to be conducted for the new five-year program of study. As such, there are no prior recommendations to consult in order to determine whether the department has addressed any issues or implemented any changes. However, the department has developed a plan for reviewing the recommendations of this and future external evaluations.

The undergraduate programme in Civil Engineering of the University of Peloponnese has proposed a five-step plan for addressing the findings of future external evaluations. These include a commitment to follow the recommendation of the EEAP; the study of the proposed changes and their implementation when feasible; the development of a new plan of action; the monitoring of all actions and their assessment at the end of a two-year period; and the compilation of an assessment report.

Analysis of judgement

The documentation provided by the department Civil Engineering of the University of Peloponnese, and the presentations by department faculty during the virtual visit of the EEAP were very comprehensive, reflecting the level of importance this evaluation represents for the department. Both students and faculty demonstrated an enthusiasm and loyalty to the programme that is indicative of a meticulous plan for success. The virtual tour by the department chair was the highlight of dedication, inspiration, and intensity of the programme's operations and facilities, and the enthusiasm of the students introduced convincing evidence of the effectiveness of the learning process. Most importantly, the interactions with faculty, staff, and students revealed an excellent climate of inclusion and collaboration.

Conclusions

The EAAP expects that its recommendations will be considered seriously, and when possible, they will be addressed in the near future. Therefore, the EAAP finds that the Civil Engineering Department is fully compliant with principle 11.

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 EEAP recommends that:

- A faculty member be appointed as a permanent assessment officer. This will permit continuous monitoring of the programme's performance and will avoid the frantic collection and analysis of data prior to an external evaluation.
- An assessment be performed for every class, in addition to the student evaluation, at the end of each semester. The assessment should list the objectives and outcomes of each class and ask the students to verify the level of competence they possess at the end of the semester.
- An exit interview of every graduating student be carried out by the department chair or a senior faculty member. This should be preceded by a written assessment, similar to the one suggested for every class, focusing on the global objectives of the programme.

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

Findings

The Department has drafted a detailed report of the transition of the former 4-year UGP (TEI) to a 5-year engineering UGP that was certified by MODIP. Both programs were in operation between the academic years of 2019-2020, which was the first year of the new program, and 2021-2022. All the new courses correspond with the previous ones and are enriched, in order to maintain a higher and competitive level of education.

Faculty members continue to support the undergraduates of the 4-year program with alternative exams, supervision of the practical training, and overall student advising. These students can attend the new UGP courses to familiarize themselves again with the subject. Notably, the faculty spend extra time after the end of the lecture to help the TEI students. If a TEI undergraduate chooses to attend a new course, it is included in the diploma supplement.

The basic requirements for practical training were also reduced to make it easier for students to apply.

Analysis of Judgement

Students admitted before the 2019-2020 academic year, are given the option to continue their studies (if they do not exceed the necessary number of years by more than 2) by 4 more semesters in order to graduate with a civil engineering degree. However, only 10 students have expressed an interest.

The department has made every effort to ensure a smooth transition and encourage the TEI students to continue their studies and to upgrade their degree. The faculty members said that due to this smooth transition, they do not have an additional workload.

Conclusions

The department is commendable for their efforts and time devoted to the transition from the 4-year program to the 5-year one. The EAAP finds the programme is fully compliant with this principle.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

None.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

The CE Department of the University of Peloponnese has demonstrated, by the data provided and the interviews conducted by the EEAP that a number of good practices have been adopted and implemented, as follows:

- The transition from the 4-year program of CE – TE to the 5-year CE University program was made in a seamless and effective manner, and the first class of student under the new program will be eligible for graduation next year.
- The CE department provides a complete undergraduate curriculum, albeit without an option for specialization, which is comparable to the curricula of other polytechnic schools in Greece.
- The teaching and learning experience of the students is good, as documented by the course evaluations and interviews of the students.
- The faculty members work very hard to maintain the quality of instruction, mentor the students, and maintain several laboratories.
- The climate in the department is excellent, and the collegiality among the faculty shows a group dedicated to the mission of the program and the well-being of the students.
- There exist strong links with the stakeholders from industry and the public sector, who seem to respect the skills of the program graduates.

II. Areas of Weakness

- The existing legal obstacles prohibiting current graduates from being granted the license of professional engineer.
- The student to faculty ratio is very high, which creates a heavy workload for the faculty members. This is exacerbated by the lack of teaching assistants and graders and limited technical support for the laboratories.
- The research productivity and funding are low, and not uniform across the faculty ranks.
- Lack of critical mass in every section of the CE discipline, which leads to difficulties with collaborative efforts, opportunities for sabbatical and personal leaves, and career development for the faculty.
- The higher than typical architectural content of the curriculum in lieu of other core subjects of civil engineering.
- The lack of experience in supervising Diploma Theses, which will begin next year, and will add significantly to the workload of the faculty.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

Recommended follow-up actions have been identified from assessing each principle earlier in this report. In summary, the EEAP recommends that CE department at PAPEL:

- Request additional faculty for the CE Department.
- Form the proposed industry council as soon as possible.
- Start the recognition and awards for students and faculty as soon as possible by seeking the support of the industrial council.
- Initiate an informal recommendation and assistance to the students to follow course prerequisite requirements, create special review sessions prior to examinations, form study groups, and introduce remedial courses for no credit.
- Reform the mathematics sequence to address the needs of engineering applications by introducing case studies from upper division classes, such as fluid and solid mechanics.
- Invite leaders of local industry to teach special topics during the semester.
- Invite underperforming students to participate in the interviews with the EEAP.
- Seek a continuous maintenance and improvement of equipment of the Laboratories with advanced instruments and modern software.
- Initiate operation of the Postgraduate and PhD Program Studies.
- Pursue the development of applied research, through the formulation of proposals for undertaking National and European projects.
- Provide incentives and support that can lead to development of researchers and a higher research output.
- Strengthen the Civil Engineering component even if that means reduction and de-emphasizing of some of its former TEI Architectural legacy.
- Establish an active social media presence to promote the Department.
- Develop a survey targeting public and private sectors regarding required skills and knowledge of graduates as well as the impact of the Department and its research on the local society.
- Appoint a permanent assessment officer.
- Conduct an assessment for every class, in addition to the student evaluation, at the end of each semester.
- Conduct an exit interview of every graduating student.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: **4, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, and 12.**

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **2.**

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are: **1, 3, and 6.**

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

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

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname

Signature

- 1. Prof. Emeritus Nikolaos Katopodes**
University of Michigan, Michigan, USA (Chair)
- 2. Mr. Charalampos Mygdalis, Civil Engineer**
Technical Chamber of Greece, Athens, Greece
- 3. Prof. Emeritus Panagiotis (Pete) Scarlatos**
Florida Atlantic University, Florida, USA
- 4. Ms. Georgia Tsafaridou, student**
Democritus University of Thrace, Greece