



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

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

EXTERNAL EVALUATION REPORT

NATIONAL AND KAPODISTRIAN UNIVERSITY
OF ATHENS

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1. EXTERNAL EVALUATION COMMITTEE

The EEC responsible for the External Evaluation of the University named:

NATIONAL AND KAPODISTRIAN UNIVERSITY OF ATHENS (UOA) consists of the following five (5) expert evaluators drawn from the Registry kept by the HQA in accordance with Law 3374/2005 and the Law 4009/2011:

1. **Prof. Georgios Gounalakis** (Chairman)
Law School, Philipps Universität Marburg, Germany
2. **Prof. Dimitris Argyropoulos**
Departments of Chemistry and Forest Biomaterials,
North Carolina State University, U.S.A.
3. **Assoc. Prof. Petros Gougoulakis**
Department of Education, Stockholm University, Sweden
4. **Prof. Daniel Himarios**
Department of Economics, University of Texas at Arlington, U.S.A.
5. **Prof. Eleftherios Mylonakis**
Division of Infectious Diseases, Brown University, U.S.A.

N.B. The length of text in each box is free. Questions included in each box are not exclusive nor should they always be answered separately; the Committee's reply to those questions is meant to provide a general outline of issues that need to be addressed.

2. INTRODUCTION

2.1 The External Evaluation Procedure

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

The External Evaluation Procedure

The External Evaluation Committee (EEC) met the following individuals and groups:

- The Rector of UOA
- The Vice Rectors of UOA
- The President and other members of the self-evaluation steering group (QAU)
- The President and members of the Administration Council
- The Dean of the Law School, representatives of the Internal Evaluation Groups (IEGs) and teaching staff of the School
- The Dean of the Economic and Political Science School, the Chairs of the Departments, representatives of the IEGs and teaching staff of the School
- The Dean of the School of Medicine, the Chairperson and the Vice-Chair of the IEGs and teaching staff of the School
- The Dean of the School of Natural Sciences, the Chairs of the Departments, representatives of the IEGs and teaching staff of the School
- The Dean of the School of Philosophy and History of Art, the Chairs of the Departments, representatives of the IEGs and teaching staff of the School
- The chief administration officers and some members of the administrative staff
- A group of undergraduate students
- A group of postgraduate students
- A group of doctoral candidates and postdoc students
- A group of alumni from different disciplines
- External social partners of UOA from the business sector and local authority representatives

The EEC interviewed separately academic staff, administrative staff and

groups of undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral students. The EEC encouraged each group to speak in confidence.

The EEC examined the following documents that were provided by the UOA:

- The self-evaluation report of UOA (Greek Version)
- The self-evaluation report of UOA (Abridged English Version)
- The external evaluation reports of the Departments
- Additional material from the UOA and the Departments (e.g. study guides, structures of the Department, statistics, etc.)
- Specific material provided upon request (detailed below)

The EEC attended formal and informal presentations by the Schools, Departments and administrative units including:

- Programs of first cycle (undergraduate), second cycle (postgraduate) and third cycle (doctoral)
- Other study programs (Erasmus, Life Long Learning, etc.)
- Research output, funding and other activities (moot courts, etc.)
- Awards, distinctions and other activities
- Library

The EEC visited the following facilities:

- The main premises of the UOA
- Different campuses including the campus of the Law School, the School of Natural Sciences, the Medical School, the School of Economics and Political Science, etc.)
- Teaching facilities and a major teaching hospital (Λαϊκό Νοσοκομείο)
- A number of administrative facilities and offices.

2.2 The Self-Evaluation Procedure

Please comment on:

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

The Self-Evaluation Procedure

The sources and documentation were appropriate. All supplementary information that the EEC requested, including data on students, work allocation, etc. was promptly provided. The materials were professionally prepared and of high quality. Those that were out of date were brought up to date by means of supplementary materials. It should be noted that the section of the self-evaluation report related to the Central administration of the Institution (“Κεντρικές Υπηρεσίες”) in some areas lacked adequate detail, self-evaluation, strategic planning and plans for improvement.

The Internal Evaluation Report of UOA volume with almost 600 page of relevant and important information gives a thorough and detailed picture of the history and the current state of UOA. It provided an excellent basis for the work of the EEC.

Finally, the presentations given by the Institution, the Schools and the Departments on location were thorough and of very high quality.

General setting of the Evaluation

The UOA has been historically a focal point of intellectual, cultural and societal development in the country throughout the existence of the Institution. The examples of dedication by faculty, administration and students were clear and evident to all members of the EEC.

The EEC was asked to evaluate the UOA under difficult conditions for the country. The financial crisis has caused and augmented a number of issues, and the EEC was challenged trying to perform this review under these difficult and challenging circumstances for our country.

The financial crisis especially affects publicly funded institutions and certainly affects the vision of the UOA. Nevertheless, the financial crisis should not be taken as an excuse for all challenges and shortcomings. A strong public University

can be instrumental in helping address social and financial challenges.

Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&2.2):

	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	X
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating (optional):

The sources and documentation were appropriate. All supplementary information that the EEC requested, including data on students, work allocation, etc. was promptly provided. However, the section of the self-evaluation report related to the Central administration of the Institution, in some areas, lacked adequate detail, self-evaluation, strategic planning and plans for improvement.

3. PROFILE OF THE INSTITUTION UNDER EVALUATION

3.1 Institutional Governance, Leadership & Strategy

Please comment on:

3.1.1 Vision, mission and goals of the Institution

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

An admirable effort by the academic units and the administration has been made towards establishing a mission and its goals. Fortunately, in the context of the current financial crisis, the long standing tradition of excellence of UOA inherently addresses its immediate mission and goals. It is imperative that the Institution focuses its energy and intellectual capital towards a short list of tangible and realistic objectives to be determined by administration (including staff), faculty, students and social partners. These objectives should focus on short-term survival and ensuring the long-term excellence of the UOA.

Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&3.1.1):

	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	X
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating (optional):

The current financial crisis has impacted the ability of UOA for medium and long term planning.

3.1.2 Organizational Development Strategy

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

The EEC met a number of administration officials that offer their genuine attention and dedication to the Institution with their skills and flexible attitude. The lack of a stable educational legislation and the lack of consistent and mutually agreed strategic planning between UOA and the governmental authorities impose severe limitations in addressing administrative effectiveness. Moreover, this lack of strategic partnership that includes central decisions, such as the number of admitted students, should be addressed to allow for coordinated medium and long term planning.

Regarding the issue of time table and specific goals, the self-evaluation states that these will be set in the future, since a new top administration is currently in place. In this context, the lack of an organizational structure chart and internal bylaws is apparent (Οργάνωση, Οργανόγραμμα, Εσωτερικός κανονισμός λειτουργίας).

These difficulties in strategic planning, the evolving financial situation, and the lack of an organizational structure result in a self-evaluation report that does not list measures to reach goals (pp. 65-69).

Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&3.1.2):

	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	X
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

3.1.3 Academic Development Strategy

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

The self-evaluation report states that the specific goals and timetables will be set in the future due to recent appointments of the senior institutional leadership (p. 75). This reasonable plan should not result in indefinite postponement.

<i>Justify rating</i>	<i>Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&3.1.3):</i>	Tick	<i>your</i>
	Worthy of merit		
	Positive evaluation		
	Partially positive evaluation		
	Negative evaluation		
<i>(optional):</i>			
<i>No rating provided as this process is still under way for reasons stated above.</i>			

3.1.4 Research Strategy

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

The acknowledged national and international reputation of the Institution in the development of Research is apparent. This is well-documented on pages 75-101 (that includes specific objectives on page 75, timetables on pages 86 and 87 and laboratory infrastructure on pages 89-96) and is further supported by international matrices that measure the effectiveness of its research mission.

With respect to the various ways of assisting faculty in attracting and administering research grants, the institution has a centralized “business unit.” What can be improved are the appropriate pre- and post- award practices. As such, one approach could be the further decentralization of such activities to the units in order to increase efficiency. Also, the process of assisting researchers with intellectual property issues can be strengthened.

<i>Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&3.1.4):</i>	Tick
Worthy of merit	X
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating (optional):

Based on productivity and objective international matrices, the research enterprise at UOA is clearly worthy of merit.

3.1.5 Financial Strategy

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

The EEC found limited evidence of a detailed financial strategy. Instead, pages 101-103 and pages 31 & 32 of the self-evaluation report include a detailed account of the current national financial situation. This is important and clearly relevant, and impacts financial planning. However, a more concrete financial strategy needs to be developed.

Of note is that the EEC appreciated the detailed description of the rules for budget development and use provided by the Institution upon request. However, this cannot replace the need for a financial strategy.

Moreover, the financial strategy related to the management of international funds is limited since the international funds are regulated by the granting agencies imposing limited degrees of freedom and the institution is using about 30% (figure extracted from personal communication during the visit of the EEC with administrative staff) of its overhead toward covering financial needs that are imposed by the fiscal constraints of the national budget.

Notably, a number of units of the institution are using their human and intellectual capital for the formation of creative, focused post-graduate courses. These are aimed at addressing the needs of various academic and societal issues, as well as sectors of the market. The units that are engaged in such activities have gained resources that allow them additional degrees of financial freedom to provide services threatened by the loss of central funds. Such examples are ample and admirable and need to be further augmented and emulated by other units where possible.

The EEC reviewed the management strategy of the regular budget (p. 101), the university property development management strategy (p. 102) and the ISO

Quality assurance (p. 103) and appreciated these descriptions.

<i>Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&3.1.5):</i>	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	X
Negative evaluation	

3.1.6 Building and Grounds Infrastructure Strategy

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

This section of the self-evaluation report is completely deficient of information. This part of the evaluation posed significant difficulties to the EEC that spend considerable amount of time on it resulting in no additional information. For example, the section refers to a study that is provided at www.uoa.gr

The EEC was finally able to locate the report at

http://www.uoa.gr/fileadmin/user_upload/PDF-files/panepistimiakes-monades/TYPA/XwrotaxikiMeletiPanepistimioupolis.pdf

However, this 260-page report (from 13-10-2009) does not substitute the need for a self-evaluation. It is recommended that the unit immediately proceed to self-evaluation preceded by a quantitative 360° survey of their efficiency and effectiveness, followed by an honest structural review.

<i>Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&3.1.6):</i>	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	X

3.1.7 Environmental Strategy

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

The issues associated with the institutions environmental strategy are thoroughly discussed and evaluated on pp. 104-112 of the self-evaluation report. This section is worthy of merit.

Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&3.1.7):

	Tick
Worthy of merit	X
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

3.1.8 Social Strategy

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

The Institution more than adequately has addressed this relevance in its mission as documented in pages 113-141 of the self-evaluation report. Beyond showing relevance in its activities and its intimate ties with societal issues, the Institution has managed to time such relevant activities in tandem with current issues as they develop within society.

Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&3.1.8):

	Tick
Worthy of merit	X
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

3.1.9 Internationalization Strategy

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

The integration of the international dimension in the curricula is evident only in part. The extensive participation of many units of the institution in ERASMUS programs and the large number of bilateral agreements, inherently provides such dimensions within the curricula. Similar considerations apply when considering the internationalization of the research component as is carried out within UOA. The EEC considers the actual participation of the overall faculty in international programs an opportunity and a challenge, especially in view of factors such as declining national resources, increasing importance and significance of globalization as driving forces in shaping society and thinking.

While the institution lists over 60 international relations/agreements, the EEC sees the possibility of streamlining them and concentrating on the vital ones. This will have the benefit of focusing, as well as reducing the administrative load associated with keeping such large number of relations/agreements alive.

Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&3.1.9):

	Tick
Worthy of merit	X
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

3.1.10 Student Welfare Strategy

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

Based on the provided data the provisions for feeding the student population is based on state law no. 4009/2011. Consequently, and in accordance with the data provided it seems that the institution provides these services in accordance with the law (for example, in 2013-14, 7109 students were fed and over 1,000 students were housed). The EEC needs to emphasize that absolute transparency for these provisions and their associated expenses is essential under the current climate of severe financial constraints.

Overall, the EEC finds that a more detailed strategic plan should be developed, especially since further financial restrictions might become a reality. For example, the development of efficiencies and the transparent allocation of resources could help maintain quality.

The enumerated infrastructure deficiencies with respect to the sports facilities and operations needs to be addressed, especially those that may pose immediate danger to the students. For example, the EEC wishes to note the technical improvements listed on page 356 of the self-evaluation report.

On page 357 of the self-evaluation report, it is noted that a variety of cultural activities operate within UOA. This provides to the students a wide array of possibilities for participation. The actual numbers of students taking advantage of these provisions seems adequate.

In addition to the above enumerated activities and provisions to student services, the EEC appreciates that the Institution also provides a large variety of foreign languages courses. The number of available courses and the number of students enrolled are declining. This should be evaluated because it is unclear as to why this reduction occurs. A more visible promotion of these courses could be beneficial in this respect.

An admirable effort by the Institution and the state is made in order to accommodate students with disabilities and special needs. Obviously, this should remain a priority for the Institution.

The special account of research funds is described on page 77 of the self-evaluation report. Also, in addition to this and other parts of the self-evaluation report, the EEC received and reviewed the Quality Manual ISO 9001:2008. The maintenance of the Quality management system was favorably viewed by the EEC and the detailed description of the processes indicate a high quality of

services.

Traditionally, the state foundation for scholarships (“IKY”) provided a significant number of scholarships to graduate and undergraduate students. Unfortunately, these provisions have been limited due to the fiscal constraints. The self-evaluation points to the term “scholarship” with a nebulous differentiation between actual scholarship and Research Assistantships (provided by research grants). It needs to be pointed out that highly qualified undergraduate students need be supported by real scholarships that do not require services by the students in a manner similar to research assistantships. The EEC suggests that the institution needs to identify and secure potential funding sources in order to support students that are selected using transparent academic and other criteria.

<i>Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&3.1.10):</i>	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	X
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

3.2 Strategy for Study Programmes

3.2.1 Programmes of Undergraduate Studies (first cycle)

Please comment on:

- the main strengths and weaknesses of the Programmes
- the basic obligations of students, e.g. attendance of lectures, course requirements, etc.
- the way the Central Administration of the Institution deals with any remarks and recommendations that the external experts pointed out in the External Evaluation of Academic Units
- Do you wish to make any comment on a point not included above?

In relation to the undergraduate program orientations (κατευθύνσεις) it is apparent that UOA offers an excessive number of them, most likely in an effort to completely cover the breadth of a discipline. Once a program becomes part of the curriculum, it needs to be regularly revisited and critically evaluated (for example, every 4 years) on the basis of the actual needs of the program based on strategic, market and societal forces. There are apparent difficulties related to the obligation of students in attending classes, course requirements, etc.

Within the self-evaluation report a number of references have been made to the possible creation of prerequisites. Such a concept, however, on a course by course level may impose significant implementation difficulties. A second-best solution to this dilemma is the creation of “phases/stages of studies,” where large segments of the curriculum are essential and have to be completed in large part (for example, $\frac{3}{4}$), prior to the student entering a subsequent phases/stages of studies. A similar approach has been adopted with success within some Departments in the School of Natural Sciences.

Such an approach may eventually address the excessive number of students that delay graduation, as the installation of a “phases/stages of studies” will have the benefit of detecting the weaknesses of students early in the process. This will offer the students the opportunity to focus on these weaknesses.

Similarly, UOA could consider introducing the process by which a student could become “inactive” after a period of time and then return to “active” after some advance notice to the School. In this way, the students can return to UOA, while, at the same time, the Institution can plan accordingly.

The EEC recognizes the outstandingly positive response of the administration and faculty to the overall concept of evaluation. The primary tangible outcome of this process (at the departmental level) has been the creation of a conscious awareness for the revision of the curricula.

It should also be stressed again that in the current financial and budgetary situation, departments and schools should become more efficient by re-

evaluating the need of courses and programs.

The EEC became aware of some limited practices that sets of previous exams are selectively distributed to some groups of students. This practice, combined with the use of the same examination material, is completely unacceptable, even if it is of limited scope and magnitude, and needs to be seriously addressed. This unfair practice completely erodes the morale and ethical scholarship framework and standards of a fine/well reputable institution, such as UOA. A possible solution the EEC would recommend is the creation of an archived collection of past exams available to all students (on the website of the Department) and a continuous renewal of the examination material.

Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&3.2.1):

	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	X
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

3.2.2 Programmes of Postgraduate Studies (second cycle)

Please comment on:

- the main strengths and weaknesses of the Programmes
- the basic obligations of students, e.g. attendance of lectures, course requirements, etc.
- the way the Central Administration of the Institution deals with any remarks and recommendations that the external experts pointed out in the External Evaluation of Academic Units
- Do you wish to make any comment on a point not included above?

UOA offers a large number of Masters programs. The variety and multi-disciplinarily of such programs offers market and societal diversity, additional development of faculty expertise, as well as, financial incentives that promote the value and quality to the program

The scheduling of these programs needs to fit the schedule of working students and courses should be offered in “after work” hours. The EEC also views favorably the central administration’s positive and flexible attitude towards these Masters programs. For not for-fee Masters programs one needs to seriously consider their viability and sustainability under the current fiscal constraints.

Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (& 3.2.2):

	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	X
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

3.2.3 Programmes of Doctoral Studies (third cycle)

Please comment on:

- the main strengths and weaknesses of the Programmes
- the basic obligations of students, e.g. attendance of lectures, course requirements, etc.
- the way the Central Administration of the Institution deals with any remarks and recommendations that the external experts pointed out in the External Evaluation of Academic Units
- Do you wish to make any comment on a point not included above?

Postgraduate doctorate programs offer powerful avenues for the intellectual and personal development of appropriately motivated students. The extensive participation of students in such programs, while viewed favorably needs to be seriously reconsidered with the following in mind:

- Objective, quantitative criteria for admission that will enhance and substantiate an official interview process that involves multiple faculty
- Setting a timetable to graduation with limits
- Define a set of objectives and duties, as related to their doctoral education
- Develop support systems that allow for full time doctoral students
- Uniform set of rules for the supervision and annual progress reports of the students

Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (& 3.2.3):

	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	X
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating (optional):

The small number of graduating students relative to the total number of candidates limited the enthusiasm of EEC in this area.

3.3 Profile of the Institution under evaluation - Conclusions and recommendations

*Please complete the following sections regarding the overall **profile of the Institution under evaluation**:*

- *Underline specific positive points:*

The UOA is an integral part of Greek society encompassing a multitude of vital activities of tremendous benefit to the country. More specifically, the University plays an instrumental role in shaping aspects of the intellectual life of Greek society. This is historically documented by the variety of its outstanding tangible contributions in all areas, including literature, the Arts, the Sciences and Medicine. Notably, with respect to its reputation and international acknowledgement by the global community there are departments that rank very high on global metrics (including Medicine, Pharmacy, etc.).

- *Underline specific negative points:*

An obvious negative ramification of the current fiscal crisis is the danger of deterioration of the morale of the faculty, staff and students. It is notable, however, to see that so far this has been tenaciously resisted and this is highly admirable. Specific, current problems of notable concern are:

- The lack of an organizational structure chart and internal by-laws (Οργάνωση, Οργανόγραμμα, Εσωτερικός κανονισμός λειτουργίας).
- The disjointed approach in finalizing the entering number of undergraduate students.
- The lack of integration of the education pyramid with ministerial processes and decisions needs be seriously addressed.
- The graduation rate for both graduate and undergraduate progress needs to be addressed with major improvements.

General suggestions

- The Institution should develop transparent and objective admission criteria to cycles 2 and 3 and adopt measures that lead to faster progress to graduation
- Pre-requisites/phases
- Focus and streamline international agreements
- Possible decentralization of research grant support
- Need to develop coherent, realistic and timely strategic plan

4. INTERNAL SYSTEM OF QUALITY ASSURANCE

4.1 Quality Assurance (QA) Policy and Strategy

Please comment on:

- the Institution's policy and goals regarding QA and Improvement
- whether the Institution has developed a specific system of QA
- how the Institution's internal QA system has been organized
- how the students and staff of the Institution are protected from biased interventions and discriminations
- whether a detailed implementation guide has been put together, containing an analysis of the QA system's operating procedures
- the involvement of students in QA
- how the Institution evaluates the effectiveness of its QA system regarding the achievement of its goals
- Do you wish to make any comment on a point not included above?

The Institution has advanced and implemented Quality Assurance, policy, goals, procedures and organization as described on pp 279-285. The EEC is aware of the presence of an ombudsman for the students offering advice and advocacy to them when conflicts arise with academic and administrative units. The EEC is not aware for any such structure for faculty and staff and this need to be addressed.

The participation of students in the QA procedures is apparent (p. 283). The Institution needs to be complimented for developing a QA program. However, no quantitative relevant data is provided and the institution needs to move along the implementation of these plans.

While the overall evaluation process has been embraced, some pockets of marginal acceptance and implementation may still be in place. The Institution should be encouraged to continue to strive towards a uniform culture of excellence based on such procedures for academic and non-academic units.

Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&4.1):

	Tick
Worthy of merit	X
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

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

Please comment on:

- whether the learning outcomes have been clearly formulated and whether they have been published
- whether the programmes are designed in such a way as to involve students and other stakeholders in the work
- how the achievement of learning outcomes is monitored
- whether there is a published Guide regarding the organization of programmes of study
- whether the ECTS system is taken into consideration and implemented
- whether there is a periodic evaluation of the programmes according to set procedures and criteria aimed at safeguarding their consistency and regular updating
- the student participation in the QA procedure of the study programmes
- whether the programmes include well-structured international mobility and -where appropriate- placement opportunities
- Do you wish to make any comment on a point not included above?

The design, approval, monitoring and evaluation of the study programs and degrees are well described on pp. 285-287 of the self-evaluation report. The EEC found that this process is appropriate and well documented. Hopefully, this will result in a culture of annual review and dissemination of data, as well as an institutionally mandated periodic re-evaluation and update of the different programs. This need is clearly recognized by the institution on p. 287. Moreover, it is important that some of the international mobility opportunities be better publicized.

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

	Tick
Worthy of merit	X
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

4.3 Teaching and learning - Assessment by students

Please comment on:

- whether multiple and coherent learning paths are provided according to the needs of students in the Institution's Departments / Faculties
- how proper guidance and support is offered to students by the Departments / Faculties' teaching staff
- whether students are informed clearly and in detail regarding the strategy of evaluation that is implemented for their programme of study, the exams or other methods of assessment they will be subjected to, what is expected of them and which criteria will be applied for the evaluation of their performance
- whether there is a formal procedure for addressing complaints and objections by students in the Departments / Faculties of the Institution
- Do you wish to make any comment on a point not included above?

The processes for teaching and learning by student are described in pages 288-291 of the self-evaluation report. The Institution also notes where deficiencies are present and where additional work still needs to be completed. The EEC notes the progress that has been made on many of these issues and, at the same time, encourages the institution to proceed with the uniform implementation of many of these processes, especially since most of these do not require additional funding.

In addition, the EEC recommends that UOA develop a common template of a syllabus with minimum requirements and expectations for each course (including the grading procedures, content, learning outcomes, etc.). Beyond that, the faculty should be able to add whatever additional information they deem relevant for their classes. The University should ensure that all courses are evaluated by students. In order to attain an adequate number of responses, the faculty and the institution should publicize the significance of this evaluation and utilize the feedback received in order to make improvements. These evaluations should be available to both faculty and students. The Institution should also set the policies and rules by which these evaluations will be used and interpreted, and also recognize the limitations inherent in such evaluations.

Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&4.3):

	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	X
Partially positive evaluation	X
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating (optional):

The EEC, after considerable discussion, felt that the rating is between the two categories above.

4.4 Admission of students, progression and recognition of studies

Please comment on:

- whether the procedures and criteria for admission to the second and third cycle of studies are implemented with consistency and transparency
- whether there are clear and distinct procedures within the Departments/Faculties, as regards recognition of higher education degrees, periods of study and knowledge acquired at an earlier stage
- whether there are clear and distinct procedures of recognition of study periods and prior learning (including the recognition of non-formal and informal learning)
- whether there are clear procedures in place regarding the cooperation of other Institutions with national ENIC/NARIC centres for ensuring coherent recognition and mobility among programmes within / among Institution (s)
- whether students are provided with detailed information (e.g. Diploma Supplement) regarding the degrees conferred to them, the achieved learning outcomes as well as the framework, the level and the content of studies they successfully completed
- whether the Institution has in place processes and tools to collect, monitor and use information regarding student progression
- Do you wish to make any comment on a point not included above?

Pages 291-292 of the self-evaluation report describe the admission to the 2nd and 3rd cycles of studies. Within the framework of the graduate 2nd and 3rd cycles of studies, as noted above, a more transparent admissions process needs to be implemented, so as to ensure consistency and transparency.

While some mechanisms are in place for transferring credits from earlier studies, the process described in the self-evaluation report (p. 299) can be simplified.

The EEC encourages the plan, as stated on the self-evaluation report, that ΜΟΔΙΠ will try to help ensure that in the future the admissions are based on strictly followed criteria.

<i>Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&4.4):</i>	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	X
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

4.5 Quality Assurance as regards the teaching staff

Please comment on:

- how it is guaranteed that the vacancy notices and recruitment of teaching staff include procedures which provide assurance that all new teaching staff members have at least the basic teaching skills
- opportunities offered to the teaching staff for their professional/scientific advancement
- how potential weaknesses of the teaching staff are identified as regards the delivery of their teaching courses
- the Institution's procedures for the support of new teaching staff as regards the teaching and evaluation methods
- how scientific activity is assessed and encouraged among the teaching staff in order to strengthen the connection between education and research
- the procedures in place so that the teaching staff members receive the necessary feedback on their personal performance as well as on the opinion of students
- whether a regulatory framework is in place for the investigation of disciplinary and academic misconduct of the teaching staff
- Do you wish to make any comment on a point not included above?

Extensive procedural details related to the recruitment of teaching staff is adequately described in the self-evaluation report on pp 292-294. Once in a position, however, a faculty member seems to be sheltered from an evaluation process as related to his/her overall performance in teaching, research and service. In view of the fact that a mandatory legal review is absent, the EEC suggests that an annual self-evaluation by the faculty member be implemented, followed by a collegial session with an appropriate peer-group for discussion and self-reflection. Similar procedures need to be implemented for all ranks of professorial and administrative staff.

The EEC recognizes the plans and procedures in place in addressing academic integrity, misconduct and the fact that there is a process for the development of a unified code of conduct and ethics. For an institution of the caliber and research output of UOA the presence of a limited number of training seminars on Academic ethics regarding plagiarism, citation rules, copyright infringement, authorship attribution, protection of the rights of the research participants, etc., is notably low.

Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&4.5):

	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	X
Negative evaluation	

4.6 Learning resources and student support

Please comment on:

- whether there are procedures for the systematic monitoring, evaluation, review and improvement of the appropriateness and effectiveness of supporting services available to students
- the available support services in regard to Libraries, Information systems and infrastructure
- the procedure in place for offering individual assistance (counselling and tutoring) to students
- Do you wish to make any comment on a point not included above?

The EEC was impressed by the laboratories and centers of excellence available within UOA (pp. 306-307). The disproportionately large number of undergraduates, however, creates formidable difficulties in the access and availability to them. Access to high quality literature information system (libraries and web resources) is an indispensable right and a must for an institution of the caliber of UOA. The limited number of opening hours of the libraries and the severe cuts in journal subscriptions available on the web, pose a major liability for the implementation of learning and research objectives.

Individualized assistance with respect to academic and progress towards a degree seems to be rather limited. On occasion, tutoring services are provided in some core courses and certain departments, but not on an individual basis.

<i>Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&4.6):</i>	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	X
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

4.7 Information Systems for Recording and Analysing Data and Indicators

Please comment on:

- whether the Institution possesses reliable means for collecting, analysing and utilizing valid information in respect to key performance indicators, the profile of the student population and student progression, success and drop-out rates
- whether the Institution possesses reliable means for collecting, analysing and utilizing valid information regarding its other functions and activities
- whether the Institution collects information about student satisfaction with their programmes of study and the career paths offered to graduates
- whether the Institution seeks comparison with other similar establishments within and beyond the European Higher Education Area, with a view to developing self-awareness and finding ways to improve its operation
- Do you wish to make any comment on a point not included above?

Despite the fact that a relatively large number of employees is engaged in data collection for the purposes of planning and use by the central administration and Ministry of Education, the self-evaluation report suggested that it needs to be updated. Overall, the self-evaluation report discusses “data collection” efforts confined to “course by course” evaluation forms, but no data collection and analysis efforts (i.e., graduation rates, demographics, course grading studies and success rates, etc.) are apparent that could be used for major planning and decision-making processes.

The University should develop a list of “peer” and “aspirant” institutions across an appropriate geographical area. This will assist the institution to benchmark itself within its peers and identify the steps necessary to achieve the status of its aspirants.

Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&4.7):

	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	X
Negative evaluation	

4.8 Dissemination of information to stakeholders

Please comment on:

- how the Institution sees to the publicization of information on the programmes offered, the expected learning outcomes, the degrees awarded, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures it uses and the learning opportunities it offers to students
- whether the information regarding the Institution's offered programmes of study is available in English or in other languages
- whether the teaching staff's CVs are included in the publicized information, both in Greek and in English
- Do you wish to make any comment on a point not included above?

The Institution has certainly developed a website following a "branding" template offering most of the information available. In order to foster multidisciplinary activities a unified presentation of the CVs and research activities of the faculty and the Units is needed. Also, a calendar of current events should be readily available.

Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&4.8):

	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	X
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating (optional):

The Units need to develop a better integrated presence in the UOA web environment.

4.9 Continuous monitoring and periodic review of the study programmes

Please comment on:

- the procedure followed with regard to assessment and periodic review of the contents of study programmes
- whether this procedure takes into account the changing needs of society
- whether this procedure takes into consideration the findings emanating from monitoring the graduates' career paths
- the procedure with which the reviews take into account the students' work load, the progress rate and completion of studies
- whether this procedure takes into account the cutting edge research activities in that particular discipline
- whether the involvement of students and other stakeholders is secured in the revision of the programmes
- Do you wish to make any comment on a point not included above?

Overall, departments seem to have the willingness and a process in place for developing and updating their curricula. Practices may vary across departments and in our discussions with faculty and the units, we found that the process works very well.

The EEC wishes to emphasize that the curricula should be updated based on the needs of the discipline in accordance with the overall strategic plan of the unit and not solely based on the expertise of the faculty at the time. Possible re-assignment of faculty within or across units should be examined within this framework.

<i>Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&4.9):</i>	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	X
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

4.10 Periodic external evaluation

Please comment on:

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

Unfortunately, no information is provided by the self-evaluation report to how the Institution plans to deal with the observations made by the EEC. During our personal interactions, however, with the higher administration, we were assured that our work was valuable and of significance.

Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&4.10):

	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	X
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

4.11. Internal System of Quality Assurance – Conclusions and recommendations

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

- *Underline specific positive points:*
 - The overall acceptance of the QA process.
 - The creation of several high quality Masters level revenue generating programs.
 - Impressive laboratories, infrastructures and centers of excellence, coupled with certain units of impressive productivity and output. The EEC felt that these successful groups are under-recognized and they should serve as examples for their peers. These successes should be highlighted and emulated by colleagues.
- *Underline specific negative points:*
 - The lack of closing the loop in the faculty evaluation process as there are still pockets within the University where the culture of evaluation has not been uniformly accepted.
 - The lack of a uniform template within syllabi with minimum requirements for each course.
 - The lack of a legal framework for the annual evaluation of staff, teaching and administrators.
 - A centralized, efficient and effective IT support units for serving better the departments and not only the administration and the data requests by the Ministry of Education.
- *Make your suggestions for further development of the positive points and needed steps for improvement:*
 - The EEC reviewed favorably the QA protocols and encourages the Institution to proceed with implementation, using and incentive-based approach.
 - Educate faculty in the need for QA and evaluation. The successful process of self-evaluation can be replicated.
 - The EEC suggests the development of a uniform template and syllabi with minimum requirements for each course.
 - Develop metrics to monitor and improve IT support.

5. OPERATION OF THE CENTRAL ADMINISTRATION OF THE INSTITUTION

5.1 Central Administration Services of the Institution

Please comment on:

- The operation of the central administration services of the Institution in regard to the:
 - Special Account for Research Funds (SARF)
 - Financial services
 - Supplies department
 - Technical services
 - IT services
 - Student support services
 - Employment and Career Centre (ECC)
 - Public/ International relations department
 - Foreign language services
 - Social and cultural activities
 - Halls of residence and refectory services
 - Institution's library

The EEC met with the staff and directors of the central administration services of the institution. Unfortunately, the self-evaluation report is deficient in specific information (other than detailed data Tables) related to the functions and in intricate details of each unit, with the exception of EAKE where a separate document was provided.

The self-evaluation is relatively weak and there is not enough depth for the EEC to conduct a thorough review of these departments. In contrast to the deep and thorough nature of the self-evaluation of the academic unit, and despite the good will of the administration, the segment of the report related to the administrative sectors is somewhat less elaborated posing deficiencies.

For example considering the IT services, the report provides numerical data, as well as a brief description of the various activities this unit is engaged in (these activities are detailed on p. 232). This is a vital activity in today's technically demanding environment that requires, amongst others, the unit to operate under strict "response" factors. Consequently, the variable "responsiveness" needs to be continuously self-evaluated and monitored. As such, this is only an example as to why this unit needs to immediately proceed toward a self-evaluation, followed by a thorough structural review.

By extension a variety of similar administrative units offering services such as Financial Services, Supplies Department, Student Support Services, Employment and Career Center, Public/international relations, Foreign languages, Social and Cultural Activities, Halls of Residence and Refectory Services, etc. also need to immediately proceed to self-evaluation preceded by a quantitative 360° survey of their efficiency and effectiveness, followed by an honest structural review.

In terms of library services availability there is a large number of such units that seem to operate in a disjointed fashion. Being aware of issues posed by distance,

the Institution needs to creatively think of inducing a consolidation component in the library services. More details on library issues have already been provided in section.

<i>Please decide in respect to the specific evaluation area (&5.1):</i>	Tick
Worthy of merit	
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	X
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating (optional):

The self-evaluation report is deficient in specific information for several components, while other components, such as EAKE, provided adequate details.

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

Please complete the following sections regarding the operation of the Institution's central administration :

- *Underline specific negative points:*

As mentioned above, the EEC found it difficult to perform an in-depth evaluation of several administration components due to the lack of an adequate self-evaluation.

The EEC therefore, suggests that the components undergo a thorough self-evaluation followed by a structural review. Please see additional detailed comments in section 5.1.

6. FINAL CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In connection with the

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

please complete the following sections:

- *Underline specific positive points:*
- The dedication of faculty in promoting the objectives of the Institution is admirable.
- The quality assurance process has been widely accepted and embraced aimed toward improvement.
- Fee-based post graduate programs are emerging with significant financial, educational and societal ramifications.
- Internationalization effectively permeates the Institution with important positive outcomes.
- A variety of research units are apparent through the institution, projecting along its tradition of excellence with major contributions to various disciplines and society as a whole. The dedication of students is also evident by their participation in the life of the Institution. Furthermore, their participation in global competitions with emerging awards is admirable.

- *Underline specific negative points:*
- The fiscal constraints offers significant challenges to long term strategic positioning. An effective two-way constructive and creative communication between the Institution and the ministry is essential. The national fiscal constraints compounded with the lack of legislative flexibility offers formidable difficulties to the Institution towards implementing its educational objectives (e.g. access to journals, student scholarships, infrastructure limitations)
- An annual review for faculty and staff is not existent.
- The Institution and the EEC recognize that for a variety of reasons both undergraduate and graduate student graduation rates are low.

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

The societal significance of the mission of UOA necessitates the following imperatives:

- An impartial, genuine, honest, open, effective and constructive strategic planning and communication between the Institution and the state needs to be implemented in order to put in place measures for its longer term viability and tradition of excellence.
- The teaching mission of the Institution needs to be emphasized (with evaluation and rejuvenation) as being a core element in all activities of the faculty and the units.
- The undergraduate admission process that impacts the Institution with unsustainable large numbers of students needs be part of the ministry-UOA strategic planning and conversation referred to above.
- Quantitative matrices and transparency, need to be put in place for the admission process for graduate students.
- Create a peer group of universities that will facilitate strategic planning, benchmarking and the achievement of goals.
- Evaluate options so as to allow students to move to an inactive status without penalties and the opportunity to return to active status within some advanced notice.
- Since there is no legal framework for a regular 360° review for teaching, administrative and support staff, it is recommended that the process start with self-evaluation followed by a peer review process.
- Since pre-requisites cannot be uniformly adopted, due to a variety of reasons, the EEC recommends that the Institution consider the introduction of “places/stages” of studies with specific courses allocated accordingly.

6.1 Final decision of the EEC

<i>Please decide in respect to the overall Institutional evaluation:</i>	Tick
Worthy of merit	X
Positive evaluation	
Partially positive evaluation	
Negative evaluation	

Justify your rating (optional):

The EEC's assessment is that UOA is worthy of merit. We conclude by pointing out that the recommendations indicated in our report are intended as ways to improve an already excellent Institution. The culture of excellence in research and teaching that the Institution has established for itself was appreciated by every member of the EEC.

The Members of the External Evaluation Committee

Name and Surname

Signature

Prof. Georgios Gounalakis (Chairman)

Law School, Philipps Universität Marburg, Germany

Prof. Dimitris Argyropoulos

Departments of Chemistry and Forest Biomaterials, North
Carolina State University, U.S.A

Assoc. Prof. Petros Gougoulakis

Department of Education, Stockholm University, Sweden

Prof. Daniel Himarios

Department of Economics, University of Texas at Arlington,
U.S.A

Prof. Eleftherios Mylonakis

Division of Infectious Diseases, Brown University, U.S.A

Athens

07 November 2015