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HELLENIC REPUBLIC

H Q A

HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE
AND ACCREDITATION AGENCY

Accreditation Report for the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS)

Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
24 August 2019

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Ευρωπαϊκή Ένωση
Ευρωπαϊκό Κοινωνικό Ταμείο

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



EUROPEAN ASSOCIATION
FOR QUALITY ASSURANCE
IN HIGHER EDUCATION

Report of the Panel appointed by the HQA to undertake the review of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) of the **Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTh)** for the purposes of granting accreditation

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PART A: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW

Abbreviations used in this report:

AP - panel	Accreditation Panel
AUTH	Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
EAPP	Real Estate Development and Management
EDIP	Support Teaching Staff
ELKE	Special Research Account
ΕΣΔΠ	Internal System of Quality Assurance (Εσωτερικό Σύστημα Διασφάλισης Ποιότητας)
HEI	Higher Educational Institution
HQA/ADIP	Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency (ΑΔΙΠ)
IEGs/OMEA	Internal Evaluation Groups/ Department's Internal Evaluation Committee
IQAS	Internal Quality Assurance System
KPIs	Key Performance Indicators
QAU/MODIP	Quality Assurance Unit (ΜΟΔΙΠ)
QMS	Quality Management System
SIS	Student Information System

I. The Accreditation Panel

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) of the Higher Education Institution named: **Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH)** comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HQA Register, in accordance with the Law 4009/2011:

- 1. Dr. Kiki Ikossi (Chair)**
George Mason University, Fairfax, USA
- 2. Prof. Yannis Dimitradis**
Universidad de Valladolid, Valladolid, Spain
- 3. Prof. Fokion Egolfopoulos**
University of Southern California, Los Angeles, USA
- 4. Prof. Konstadinos Goulias**
University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB), USA
- 5. Prof. Panos D. Prevedouros**
University of Hawaii at Mānoa, Honolulu, Hawaii, USA

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

The Hellenic Quality Assurance (HQA) formed an external and independent panel of experts to conduct an assessment of the compliance of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH) in accordance to the HQA Quality Assurance requirements. The assessment was conducted in Thessaloniki. The method used was based on sampling of the Institutions activities and it was aimed to evaluate the fulfilment of the HQA requirements of the relevant Quality Standard of the IQAS and comment on its compliance, effectiveness and applicability for the scope of the requirements.

On July 1st the 5-member panel met at HQA headquarters, with the Faculty members of the HQA (Prof. Pantelis Kyprianos, President, Dr. Christina Besta, General Manager, and HQA officers Dr. Despina Galani and Katerina Tsaliki) and participated in a detailed briefing about the accreditation process and its objectives. In the afternoon the committee met in private to divide up the tasks and make other arrangements in response to the site visit and report requirements. The panel arrived in Thessaloniki in the evening of July 1st. Our panel was escorted to the designated hotel by Mr. Aris Tachinoslis, from AUTH's public relations department and welcomed by AUTH Rector Prof. Pericles Mitkas.

On July 2 the panel had a full day of meetings in the conference room Poseidon of the Mediterranean Palace hotel, with AUTH as follows:

Meeting with the Rector and the Vice-Rectors

- *Rector, Professor Pericles A. MITKAS*
- *Vice Rector for Research & Coordination, Professor Theodoros LAOPOULOS*
- *Vice-Rector for Planning & Development, Professor Despina KLAVANIDOU*
- *Vice-Rector for Academic & Student Affairs, Professor Ariadni STOGIANNIDOU*
- *Vice-Rector for Finance, Professor Nikolaos VARSAKELIS*
- *Vice Rector for Human Resources, Professor Georgios DELLIOS*

During this meeting AUTH Rector Mitkas gave detailed and useful information on the University statistics departments and research and scholarly activities. The presentation was followed by informative discussion.

Meeting with the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU/MODIP)

- *Chair of QAU, Vice-Rector for Academic & Student Affairs, Professor Ariadni STOGIANNIDOU*
- *Professor Alkiviadis BAIS, member*
- *Professor Antonis GOULAS, member*
- *Professor Vassilios GOUNARIS, member*
- *Professor Georgios PAPACHRISTOU, member*
- *Professor Georgios TAGARAS, member*
- *Georgios PERPERIDIS, Representative of the Special Teaching Staff*
- *Nikolaos PARALYKIDIS, Representative of the Laboratory Teaching Staff*

- *Ourania KOPALIDOU, Representative of the Special Technical Laboratory Staff for teaching services*
- *Venetia BALTADAKI, Representative of the Administrative Staff*
- *Alexandra TZANERAKI, Responsible for the Secretariat of QAU*
- *Eleni BITSIADOU, Secretariat of QAU*
- *Konstantinos AIVAZIDIS, Responsible for the QAU-QMS*

During this meeting the panel met with the Deputy Rector/President of MODIP, MODIP representatives & MODIP staff. The President of MODIP made a detailed presentation describing the MODIP activities followed by an informative discussion.

- Meeting with Faculty members and Internal Evaluation Groups (IEGs/OMEA) representatives

Deans of the Faculties:

- of Health Sciences, Professor Theodoros DARDAVESIS
- of Engineering, Professor Konstantinos KATSIFARAKIS
- of Philosophy, Professor Dimitrios MAVROSKOUFIS
- of Physical Education & Sport Sciences, Professor Kosmas CHRISTOULAS
- of Agriculture, Forestry & Natural Environment, Professor Dimitrios KOVEOS

Heads of the Schools:

- of Economic Sciences, Prof. Dimitrios KOUSENIDIS
- of Veterinary Medicine, Prof. Nikolaos PAPAIOANNOU
- of Early Childhood Education, Prof. Melpomeni KANATSOULI
- of Geology, Prof. Haralampos FEIDAS
- of Informatics, Prof. Eleftherios ANGELIS

Internal Evaluation Groups' Coordinators:

- *School of Psychology, Prof. Eugenia GEORGAKA*
- *School of Civil Engineering, Assoc. Prof. Aikaterini TSIKALOUDAKI*

The meeting started with information on the activities of each of the faculty that related to the accreditation process. A very useful discussion on how the departments ensure quality in the education and research objectives followed.

Meeting with undergraduate students

- *Meropi Karakioulaki*
- *Miltos Giannios*
- *Thanos Arvanitidis*
- *Theofanis Markopoulos*
- *Thanos Venetis*

- *Sofia Moisiadou*
- *Fotini Dervisi*
- *Stella Avgerinou*
- *Laoura Samourkasoglou*
- *Delioridou Chrisoula*
- *Pandora Liasopoulou*
- *Ioannis Anastasiou*
- *Katerina Nikou and*
- *Dimitrios Mitsopoulos*

During this meeting the Students expressed their satisfaction from their study experience and discussed the campus facilities; student input in quality assurance; priority issues concerning student life and welfare. The meeting with the students was constructive in gaining insights on the educational activities at AUTH.

On July 3rd the panel had a full day of meetings in the in the conference room Poseidon of the Mediterranean Palace hotel, with AUTH as follows:

Meeting with postgraduate students

- *Alexis DASIOS, School of History and Archaeology*
- *Themistoklis CHRISOS, School of Physics*
- *Dimitra SIDIROPOULOU, School of Economics*
- *Anastasia CHATZIIOANNOU, School of Informatics*
- *Thanasis LAGOPOULOS, School of Informatics*
- *Aggeliki VELISSARIOU, School of Early Childhood Education*
- *Ioanna VARSALAMI, School of Medicine*
- *Efthimis ZIAGAS, School of Physical Education and Sports Science*
- *Rafail TRAGIAKOS, School of Agriculture*
- *Paraskevi ARAPOGLOU, School of Pastoral and Social Theology (PhD Student)*
- *Vasilis PAPANIKOLAOU, School of Electrical and Computer Engineering (PhD Student)*
- *Makrina CHOIDOU, School of Law (PhD Student)*
- *Charalabos STAVRIDIS, School of Civil Engineering (PhD Student)*
- *Eliza THEODORANOU, School of Drama (PhD Student)*

During this meeting the Students' views on learning process, student input in quality assurance; priority issues concerning grants, mobility, research and career opportunities were discussed.

Meeting with the chief administration officers

- Vaios BABLEKIS, General Director of Financial Services
- Nikos MANOUSARIDIS, General Director of Technical Services and IT
- Aikaterini KALLIARIDOU, Head of the Directorate of Academic Units and Career Offices
- Georgia PETRIDOU, Director of the Special Research Account for Research Funds
- Spyridon ILIAS, Head of Senate's Secretariat
- Vasiliki TOMPROU, Head of Administration Department

During this meeting the impact of Institutional documents (strategic plan, QA manual etc.) in the development of the Institution was discussed; special issues arising from internal evaluation process and the interactions with Rector & Vice-Rector/President of MODIP.

Meeting with alumni

- Pantelis SAVVIDIS, Journalist
- Christina KARRA, Physics Graduate
- Dr Aggeliki MONEDA, IT Administrator at Archeological Museum of Thessaloniki
- Athina VAVOURI, Programmer at NET2GRID
- Ioanna LIOUSTA, Municipal Library
- Marialena KOSTOULI, Psychologist at Anatolia College
- Konstantinos RALLIS, Physical Trainer, Center of Special Education
- Nikos EFTHIMIADIS, President of "Redestos" - Efthymiadis Agrotechnology Group
- Tasos TZIKAS, President at Helexpo
- Maria TSIOUTANI, Lawyer
- Michalis ALEXANDRIDIS, Director of Newspaper Macedonia

During this meeting the alumni discussed their experience of studying at AUth and their career path.

Meeting with external stakeholders

- Mayor of Thessaloniki, Yannis BOUTARIS
- Member of the Geotechnical Chamber of Greece, Nikoleta KRAVVA
- President of the Medical Chamber of Thessaloniki, Nikolaos NITSAS
- First Vice-President of the Thessaloniki Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Emmanuil VLACHOGIANNIS
- President of the Alexander Innovation Zone S.A., Kyriakos LOUFAKIS
- President of the Greek Exporters Association, George KONSTANTOPOULOS
- President of the Bar Association of Thessaloniki, Efsthathios KOUTSOCHINAS
- President of the Technical Chamber of Greece / Section of Central Macedonia, Paris BILLIAS
- President of the Federation of Industries of Greece (SBE), Athanasios SAVVAKIS
- Head of OK!Thess, Simon BENSASSON

- President of the Economic Chamber of Greece / Department of Central Macedonia, Nikolaos ANTONAKIS
- President of the National Theater of Northern Greece, Aristotelis STYLIANOU

During this meeting the relations of AUTH with external stakeholders from the private and the public sector were discussed. Valuable information was collected from the industry, society and local authority representatives.

Meeting with the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU/MODIP)

- *Chair of QAU, Vice-Rector for Academic & Student Affairs,*
- *Professor Ariadni STOGIANNIDOU*
- *Professor Alkiviadis BAIS, member*
- *Professor Antonis GOULAS, member*
- *Professor Vassilios GOUNARIS, member*
- *Professor Georgios PAPACHRISTOU, member*
- *Professor Georgios TAGARAS, member*
- *Georgios PERPERIDIS, Representative of the Special Teaching Staff*
- *Nikolaos PARALYKIDIS, Representative of the Laboratory Teaching Staff*
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- *Venetia BALTADAKI, Representative of the Administrative Staff*
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- *Eleni BITSIADOU, Secretariat of QAU*
- *Konstantinos AIVAZIDIS, Responsible for the QAU-QMS*

During this meeting discussion focused on several points/findings, which need further clarification.

Closure meeting with the Rector & the Deputy Rector/President of MODIP

- *Rector, Professor Pericles A. MITKAS*
- *Chair of QAU, Vice-Rector for Academic & Student Affairs Professor Ariadni STOGIANNIDOU*

During this meeting a brief discussion of the key panel findings was made.

The Panel requested a fast drive around tour of AUTH's facilities on the way to the airport. The Rector, Prof. Pericles Mitkas, accompanied the panel, and provided useful information on AUTH's urban and rural buildings and facilities. The panel returned to Athens in the evening of July 3rd and spent July 4th, 5th and 6th in the preparation of this report.

The following material, provided by ADIP and MODIP was available for the report:

- A1. Πρόταση Πιστοποίησης ΕΣΔΠ ΑΠΘ

- A2. ΦΕΚ ΕΣΔΠ ΑΠΘ
- A3. Εγχειρίδιο Ποιότητας ΕΣΔΠ-ΑΠΘ
- A4.1. Οργανισμός ΑΠΘ
- A4.2 Εσωτερικοί Κανονισμοί ΑΠΘ
- A5. Πολιτική Ποιότητας ΑΠΘ
- A6. Στοχοθεσία Ποιότητας ΑΠΘ
- A7. Στρατηγικό Σχέδιο 2019-2022
- A8.1. ΟΠΕΣΠ ΑΠΘ 2015-2016
- A8.2. ΟΠΕΣΠ ΑΠΘ 2016-2017
- A8.3. ΟΠΕΣΠ ΑΠΘ 2017-2018
- A9.1. Διαδικασία καταμέτρησης και είσπραξης κοινοχρήστων
- A9.2. Αλγόριθμος Κατανομής ΤΠ
- A9.3. Έντυπα Προμήθειας - Συντήρησης Επιστημονικού Εξοπλισμού
- A9.4. Απόφαση Συγκλήτου - Αξιολόγηση μαθημάτων & διδασκόντων
- A9.5. Δομημένος Έλεγχος-Σημεία Ελέγχου Προτάσεων
- A9.6. Δομημένος Έλεγχος-Παραδείγματα Εισηγήσεων ΜΟΔΙΠ
- A9.7. Συνοπτικός Απολογισμός ΜΟΔΙΠ 2017-2018 προς ΕΛΚΕ
- A.10. Έκθεση Προόδου
- Aristotle University External Evaluation Report 2016
- E1_STANDARDS FOR QUALITY ACCREDITATION_IQAS_EN
- E12_Guidelines for the Accreditation Panel
- E13_MAPPING GRID
- E14_Template for the Accreditation Report
- E15_Briefing of Experts
- ΔΕΙΚΤΕΣ_ΕΣΔΠ_ΑΠΘ_2015-16
- ΔΕΙΚΤΕΣ_ΕΣΔΠ_ΑΠΘ_2016-17
- ΔΕΙΚΤΕΣ_ΕΣΔΠ_ΑΠΘ_2017-18
- Οδηγός Πιστοποίησης_en

In addition, at the panel's request the following information was provided during the visit:

- The presentations provided by the Rector and MODIP President of AUTH
- An integrated view of AUTH indicators of 2015-2016, 2016-2017, 2017-2018
- A list of active signed agreements with external stakeholders
- Access to AUTH MODIP data site was temporarily given to the panel members to collect the information requested for the evaluation.
- ΑΔΙΠ - Εγχειρίδιο δεδομένων ποιότητας v1.04.001
- ΑΝΑΦΟΡΕΣ ΔΕΙΚΤΩΝ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΑΡΙΣΤΟΤΕΛΕΙΟ ΠΑΝΕΠΙΣΤΗΜΙΟ ΘΕΣΣΑΛΟΝΙΚΗΣ
- AUTH's information material, such as brochures papers, surveys and statistics, student surveys, etc.
- Information on quality indicators for student associations and clubs.

III. Institution Profile

According to the July 2nd, 2019, *Rector* and Vice Rector and MODIP president, presentations (information also available <https://ga.auth.gr> for 2012-13) AUTH is the largest University in Greece and the Southeast of Europe with:

- 11 Faculties (Σχολή) with 41 Schools (Τμήμα)
- 1 Single-school Faculty (Law)
- 130 Academic areas of specialization
- 42 undergraduate degree programmes
- 143 graduate degree programmes (3 international and 140 national programmes)
- 42 Ph.D degree programmes
- 9 programmes in foreign languages and 12 capable of instruction in foreign language
- 1 University Hospital – Cooperating with 4 more hospitals
- 63 Clinics (Medicine, Veterinary and Dental schools)
- 311 Laboratories (295 in Government’s Gazette - of them 5 Accredited, 6 Certified & 19 For Services)
- 16 Research Units (i.e. Meteorological and Earthquake Stations, Museums, Archives)
- 23 Academic Study and Research Units (3 Philology, 5 History & Archaeology, 1 Philosophy & Pedagogy, 1 German Language, 1 Italian Language, 2 Mathematics, 2 Physics, 3 Agriculture, 1 Forestry and 4 Architecture)
- 49 Computer Labs
- 10 Museums
- 1 Comprehensive Central Library and 47 Peripheral (thematic or of Schools)

The number of students is heavily dependent on the degree of activity with a total of around 85,645 registered students, from 94 countries. Within the student population there are 6,344 post-graduate and 4,407 Ph.D. candidates. Among the undergraduate students approximately 57.13% are considered as active (within the normative time plus 2 years). In addition, in post graduate studies AUTH has multiple post-graduate degrees dispersed in many different departments and schools. Major points of pride are international awards and the more recently received prestigious award, called EUROPEAN UNIVERSITY – EPICUR, June 2019 from the European Partnership for an Innovative Campus Unifying Regions.

In Research according to the Rector’s presentation on July 2nd, 2019 to our panel, AUTH has approximately € 59.2 Million in research contracts from a variety of private and public funding agencies of which 27.2% is from private sources. Although, AUTH is experiencing a decrease in general funding and a decrease in Full Time Equivalent faculty, it is consistently in the top two universities of Greece and has a reasonably high ranking internationally.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

Principle 1: Institution Policy for Quality Assurance

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD APPLY A QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY AS PART OF THEIR STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT. THIS POLICY SHOULD BE DEVELOPED AND ADJUSTED ACCORDING TO THE INSTITUTIONS' AREAS OF ACTIVITY. IT SHOULD ALSO BE MADE PUBLIC AND IMPLEMENTED BY ALL PARTIES INVOLVED.

The quality assurance policy is the guiding document which sets the operating principles of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS), the principles for the continuous improvement of the Institution, as well as the Institution's obligation for public accountability. It supports the development of quality culture, according to which, all internal stakeholders assume responsibility for quality and engage in quality assurance. This policy has a formal status and is publicly available.

The policy for quality is implemented through:

- *the commitment for compliance with the laws and regulations that govern the Institution;*
- *the establishment, review, redesign and redefinition of quality assurance objectives, that are fully in line with the institutional strategy.*

This policy mainly supports:

- *the organisation of the internal quality assurance system;*
- *the Institution's leadership, departments and other organisational units, individual staff members and students to take on their responsibilities in quality assurance;*
- *the integrity of academic principles and ethics, guarding against discriminations, and encouragement of external stakeholders to be involved in quality assurance;*
- *the continuous improvement of learning and teaching, research and innovation;*
- *the quality assurance of the programmes and their alignment with the relevant HQA Standards;*
- *the effective organisation of services and the development and maintenance of infrastructure;*
- *the allocation and effective management of the necessary resources for the operation of the Institution;*
- *the development and rational allocation of human resources.*

The way in which this policy is designed, approved, implemented, monitored and revised constitutes one of the processes of the internal quality assurance system.

Institution compliance

AUTH established a policy and a process that is appropriate for its size and diversity of the specialties. The policy complies with the laws and regulations that govern AUTH but it is hampered by the ongoing frequent changes in legislation and regulations. In spite of these barriers to continuity, MODIP at AUTH established, reviewed, and vetted procedures, redesigned and redefined quality assurance objectives, and established a comprehensive process to enable continuous improvement of institutional strategy. Many KPIs are customized to the AUTH's mission, aligned with its goals, and a streamlined process for quantifying indicators has been defined. A comprehensive online system has been designed, tested, and

implemented to collect and distribute information about quality assurance processes and outcomes. The members of the IQAS accreditation panel accessed internal and external data and evaluation reviews. Moreover, the quality assurance coordination between the team of Internal evaluation (OMEA) and MODIP happens through the exchange of data, issue identification and actions in response to issues identified as well as feedback to measure success of interventions. During our visit we ascertained that quality assurance process begins to be accepted by internal to AUTH stakeholders.

Continuous improvement is supported by the online system of data collection, measurement, and potentially detailed analysis for continuous improvement. In addition, communication between the different OMEAs & MODIP appears to be working well, the online information is available and accessible using a hierarchical system of access to protect any personal data. Our panel observed a clear and strong commitment by the institution's leadership (current and incoming at the level of Rector and Vice-Rectors) to continue this effort. MODIP also appears to have procedures in place to ensure continuity of knowhow. The 2019-2022 strategic plan has been produced, and the incoming administration will continue adding a new initiative for strategic action plan.

Quality Assurance as a process appears to be widely accepted by a substantial number of faculty members and departments of the Institution. The examples mentioned during our meetings include formation of committees to enhance collaboration, support for access to educational programmes; support for people with disabilities, and a variety of seminars on research design and proposal preparation. However, for faculty members, an added effort is needed to alleviate resistance to provide reliable information.

Among administrative staff members, the initial resistance to change has been replaced with attempts to build on the ISO compliance of some units and incorporate the MODIP/HQA work to help create a culture of continuous improvement and quality assurance commitment by staff. The reasoning this panel received from AUTH is as follows: MODIP is providing a process, and develops customized indicators of quality assurance that are not provided by ISO. Also, MODIP activities provide measurement, feedback, tracking, and follow up for rectification with indicators.

A timid attempt is made to communicate quality assurance reviews, assessments, and outcomes to students and external stakeholders. The role of students is somewhat problematic and not clear in the quality assurance process. For example, students provide systematically formal and informal input for course instruction effectiveness. However, input about other aspects of student life follows a haphazard process and requires a better streamlining for ongoing feedback and evaluation of student concerns and problem solutions. Moreover, added effort is needed to involve student feedback in a pro-active and meaningful way. As it is described in the documents we reviewed and discussed with MODIP, a group of undergraduate students, and a group of graduate students, their involvement in strategy formation is in essence absent. Similarly, among the alumni and external stakeholders, who made particularly enthusiastic

comments about the technical preparation of the AUTH graduates, involvement in goal formation, and in the quality assurance process requires improvement and a more active engagement. AUTH has strong and sustained relationships with many organizations, including various Chambers and the Bar Association of Thessaloniki, and these take the form of international conferences, projects, internships, services, fellowships, publishing and editorial work, and student organizations. It also supports the National School of Judges with AUTH faculty members. Currently due to legislative changes, these organizations cannot be integrated in the strategy formation and quality assurance process with an explicit role. Instead, their participation is implicit and ad-hoc.

Financial and programmatic independence of the institution is of paramount importance for quality assurance and ability to reach excellence. Strict constraints and constant changes in regulations make it impossible to provide the necessary resources (human and otherwise). For example, AUTH's general operation budget is well below the minimum operating threshold, the building maintenance and modernization are in essence absent, and student housing is outside the domain of the Institution. Moreover, MODIP is in clear need of additional permanent staff to support the Quality Assurance and Accreditation functions.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Develop a student engagement process focusing on the campus/student life over and above classroom activities and teaching evaluations.
- Develop an external stakeholder engagement process that leverages existing relationships and focused on quality assurance.
- Leverage the alumni network to support and receive input about quality assurance and accreditation.

Principle 2: Provision and Management of the Necessary Resources

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD ENSURE APPROPRIATE FUNDING FOR LEARNING AND TEACHING ACTIVITIES, RESEARCH, AND ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES IN GENERAL. RELEVANT REGULATIONS SHOULD BE IN PLACE TO ASSURE THAT ADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES FOR TEACHING AND RESEARCH ARE AVAILABLE AND READILY ACCESSIBLE (E.G. CLASSROOMS, LABORATORIES, LIBRARIES, IT INFRASTRUCTURE, PROVISION OF FREE MEALS, DORMITORIES, CAREER GUIDANCE AND SOCIAL WELFARE SERVICES, ETC.).

Funding

The Institution ensures adequate funding to cover not only the overhead and operational costs (regular budget and public investment budget) but also costs related to research, innovation and development (Special Account for Research Funds, Property Development and Management Company). The financial planning and the operation of an effective financial management system constitute necessary tools for the full exploitation of the resources.

Infrastructure

Based on the requirements and needs arising during its operation, the Institution has determined ways to define, allocate and maintain all the necessary resources to ensure its smooth and proper functioning, i.e. teaching, research and auxiliary facilities, equipment and software, support facilities (cleaning, transportation, communication) etc. The scope of the IQAS should include a suitable managing and monitoring system to safeguard the infrastructure. Compliance to the internal regulations is also necessary.

Working environment

The Institution ensures -as far as possible- that the working environment has a positive effect on the performance of all members of the academic community (students and staff). Factors that are taken into consideration towards the creation of such a favorable environment are, among others, the sanitary facilities, the lighting/heating/ventilation system, the cleanliness and the overall appearance of the premises, etc. The scope of the IQAS should include an appropriate managing and monitoring system to promote a favorable working environment and to ensure compliance with the existing provisions.

Human resources

The Institution and the academic units are responsible for the human resources development.

The subject areas, as well as the competences and tasks of the staff members are defined by the corresponding job descriptions that are established within the operation scope of each academic or administrative unit. These posts are filled following the requirements set by the law, on the basis of transparent, fair and published processes. The continuous training and evaluation of the staff is considered necessary for the enhancement of the performance, which is recorded and monitored as provided in the context of the IQAS.

The Institution should acknowledge and provide the necessary resources for the implementation of the IQAS, its enhancement and the provision of services that assist the satisfaction of the quality assurance requirements. Moreover, the Institution (Quality Assurance Unit-QAU) should properly organise the administrative structure and staffing of the IQAS, with a clear allocation of competences and tasks to its staff members.

Institution compliance

The available resources for funding the infrastructure are managed efficiently and creatively. The processes are clearly described in the manual and implemented effectively. The desirable amount of funding for the operation of AUP is clearly inadequate.

A large component of the funding of AUTH operations comes directly from the Greek government. The personnel salaries are paid directly by the government and the institution is given a yearly budget to meet its operational cost. In addition, the operation of special research account (ELKE) and the AUTH real estate development and management Co (EAPP) provide revenues for the operation of the institution.

The University operations and building maintenance are covered by this funding. An unfortunate outcome of the current economic state of Greece is the reduction of this budget to levels that hinder the operation of the University. In particular, the operations budget has been reduced by 27% below the 2009 levels and for the last 6 years it has been consistently below the minimum level required for operations of AUTH.

Alternative methods for funding to overcome this situation have been pursued by the AUTH. For example, 10% of research budgets to external funding sources is dedicated to overhead, as a means to supplement the operation needs of the institution. However, using research returns to fund university operations and basic needs inhibits research infrastructure development and threatens the leading research role of AUTH in Greece.

Overall research is managed well. A special account managing research funds is in place and operates well. Research funds come from different sources (26.5% ESPA, 27.2 Private sources, 18.5 European commission, 16.4 public sources, 11.4 organizations.) The University is extremely active and very successful in research funding solicitation. It ranked first among Greek universities in number of funded research projects in the programme ΕΡΕΥΝΩ-ΔΗΜΙΟΥΡΓΩ-ΚΑΙΝΟΤΟΜΩ (Α' ΚΥΚΛΟΣ) – ΓΓΕΤ.

Additional funding options such as private sources have also been explored. The outcome of the pursuit of alternative funding for operation costs is very limited due to legislative constraints for the operation of Greek Universities.

AUTH has appropriate well thought out and transparent processes for allocating the available funds towards the infrastructure, teaching and research needs of each department. AUTH's needs are documented with plans for improvement.

The inadequacy of the available funds for operations impacts both the working environment and human resources areas. The number of full-time teaching faculty members with permanent positions has been reduced over the last 5 years from about 2023 to 1742. To ensure that the educational teaching requirements of the institution are met, the state mandated the hiring of temporary academic personnel with limited time contracts. (ΠΔ407 και Πρόγραμμα Ακαδημαϊκής και Διδακτικής Εμπειρίας). MODIP was not able to verify the exact number, nevertheless, the data indicates that a large number of the academic personnel works under time limited contracts. This points out to the creation of a dual system of members of the teaching personnel with unequal privileges who cannot participate effectively in the development of the University.

Suitability of the working environment is demonstrated by the assessment from the students and personnel and the existence of active continuous plans for improvement for buildings, facilities and processes.

Our panel was able to conduct a very short external visit of the university area. AUTH has a large urban campus with some old and historic buildings. Some new buildings exist in a new annex campus that houses the art, music and physical education departments. Although our panel did not have the opportunity to visit the interior space of AUTH buildings, the information collected from student interviews was very useful. The determination of the adequacy of the working environment varies with buildings and departments. In general, although all acknowledge the desire for improvements, the existing infrastructure is sufficient for AUTH's current needs, and plans for improvement are in place.

The institution has an effective management system in place for monitoring and safeguarding the condition of the infrastructure. The continuous legislative changes affecting the compliance with the existing provisions are monitored and publicized to all entities affected. The students that our panel met, had a request to improve safety at some locations of AUTH's main campus. The facilities directors were aware of the issues involved and the processes for mitigation were enacted.

Despite all the budget and human resource reductions, AUTH is successful in its mission. The processes for hiring personnel and the requirements for career advancement are clearly stated and are in full compliance with existing legislation. AUTH has set clear standards for the annual evaluation of administrative personnel and has available opportunities for training and advancement. The faculty has clear benchmarks for advancement.

Annual course evaluations for each faculty are also conducted with input by the students. The compilation of the results from student evaluations are available to the teaching personnel to help their future planning for course and teaching techniques improvement. Our panel feels that all personnel, including faculty, should undergo periodic comprehensive review to benefit the overall quality assurance processes.

With regards to human resources for the accreditation and quality assurance process, the large size of AUTH and the volume of information that needs to be collected and monitored require a considerably larger administrative staff than the staff MODIP has today (see also assessment of Principle 4).

AUTH has also instituted processes targeting promotion of their identified elements in the strategic plan for excellence. For example, for improving the University standing, research proposal and solicitation training is available for the faculty. A positive outcome was already observed by the success of research grants awarded to departments (see e.g. successful ERC proposals) which had minimum prior success.

AUTH provided substantial information, given the available resources, supporting full compliance with this principle.

Panel judgement

Principle 2: Provision & Management of the Necessary Resources	
2.1 Funding	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
2.2 Infrastructure	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
2.3 Working Environment	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
2.4 Human Resources	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Principle 2: Provision & Management of the Necessary Resources (overall)	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- The significant reduction of public funding and the restrictions in pursuing alternative funding by legislative constraints, constitutes a significant threat to the successful operation and improvement of AUTH.
- The inadequacy of the available funds for operations impacts negatively both the working environment and human resources areas of AUTH. Our panel recommends to increase this budget substantially in a sustained fashion.
- Our panel feels that if an appropriate annual evaluation was conducted for all personnel, it would have benefited the overall quality assurance processes.

- Academic work on limited time contracts should be used as a last resource because this practice threatens the Academic faculty tenure protection of freedom of expression that impacts quality.
- The large size of AUTH and the volume of information that needs to be collected and monitored require a considerably larger administrative staff than the existing MODIP members.

Principle 3: Establishing Goals for Quality Assurance

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD HAVE CLEAR AND EXPLICIT GOALS REGARDING THE ASSURANCE AND CONTINUOUS UPGRADE OF THE QUALITY OF THE OFFERED PROGRAMMES, THE RESEARCH AND INNOVATION ACTIVITIES, AS WELL AS THE SCIENTIFIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES. THESE GOALS MAY BE QUALITATIVE OR QUANTITATIVE AND REFLECT THE INSTITUTIONAL STRATEGY.

The Institution's strategy on quality assurance should be translated into time-specific, qualitative and quantitative goals which are regularly monitored, measured and reviewed in the context of the IQAS operation, and following an appropriate procedure.

Examples of quality goals:

- *rise of the average annual graduation rate of the Institution's Undergraduate Programmes to x%;*
- *upgrade of the learning environment through the introduction of digital applications on;*
- *improvement of the ratio of scientific publications to teaching staff members to;*
- *rise of the total research funding to y%*

The goals are accompanied by a specific action plan for their achievement, and entail the participation of all stakeholders.

Institution compliance

The Institution has clear and explicit goals towards improving the quality of education, research, administrative functions, and infrastructure. A very detailed list of actions is provided aiming to address numerous challenges, both internal and external, and to capitalize on existing strengths of the University. The list of actions and goals are aligned well with the Strategic Plan.

The proposed goals for quality assurance appear to be ambitious and more qualitative than quantitative. All or most issues are itemized and addressed but it is not clear whether the goals will be achieved within the proposed time frame. There are numerous issues that will present challenges including existing culture in academia with inertia that is quite substantial, funding cuts, declining infrastructure, and a rather notable lack of autonomy given the increased role of the Ministry of Education in academic affairs. Thus, AUTH should be commended for taking such bold actions, which even if they are partially successful will clearly improve the quality of its main missions.

Regarding pairing the goals with key KPIs, it is recognized that under the circumstances it is not possible to make realistic projections. For example, the student to faculty ratio, a key KPI, is a function of the ability of the University to make new faculty hires and this could be complicated by the financial situation of the country that affects the actions taken by the Ministry of Education. This ratio is further complicated by how students and faculty are accounted for (e.g., what counts as full time equivalent faculty member and what counts as an active student) and from decisions made by the Ministry of Education to increase the number of the incoming students (e.g., allowing transfers from other institutions) well beyond the University recommendations. However, it is unclear how KPIs related to the quality of the graduating undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral students will be quantified. It is also not clear which

KPIs will be used to judge the quality of the research input and output of the faculty. Regarding the input, internal and external research funding is essential for advancing research and improving infrastructure, with the understanding that such funding varies among different disciplines. Regarding the output, the reference to bibliometrics is appropriate but the details matter. Different disciplines should use different methods and sources, and some general expectations should be emphasized.

Regarding the University's world ranking, several comments can be made. First, caution is required for the University to emphasize its ranking that ranges between 300 and 500, as an argument could be made that this is typically at the so-called "noise level" and that it is hard to distinguish between Institutions within that range. Regarding the effect of the financial crisis, it does not appear to be a major factor in those rankings dated back to 2003. The projected goal of reaching a ranking in the 100-200 range, will require radical changes in both the teaching and research cultures. The students will need to attend lectures, carry out frequently assigned homework and projects, and achieve higher grades, while the faculty will have to be engaging and innovative and involve up-to-date teaching methods and material. The existing low grades achieved by the undergraduate students on the average, reflect negatively on both students and faculty and the argument that a specific professor "is difficult" is an outdated one and clearly misleading. Regarding research, the faculty needs to actively pursue internal and most important external funding, with the latter being a major factor in improving the University's financial situation as well as its national and international visibility.

The proposed approaches of monitoring, improving, and communicating the stated goals are considered as satisfactory and effective.

Panel judgement

Principle 3: Establishing Goals for Quality Assurance	
3.1 Study Programmes/ education activities	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
3.2 Research & Innovation	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
3.3 Administration (funding, human resources, infrastructure management)	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

3.4 Resources (funding, human resources, infrastructure)	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Principle 3: Establishing Goals for Quality Assurance (overall)	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- Identify the key factors that impact the University rankings and prioritize strategies to improve them.
- Develop a concise set of indicators that can be used for assessing the faculty performance recognizing fundamental differences among the disciplines at AUTH.
- Establish a uniform process to analyze student feedback regarding course grading by the faculty, identify outliers, and explore ways to mitigate existing issues that affect negatively teaching practices and effectiveness.

Principle 4: Structure, Organisation and Operation of the IQAS

INSTITUTIONS SET UP AND ESTABLISH AN INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM, WHICH INCLUDES PROCESSES AND PROCEDURES COVERING ALL AREAS OF ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES AND FUNCTIONS. SPECIAL FOCUS IS GIVEN ON THE QUALITY OF TEACHING AND LEARNING, INCLUDING THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT, RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND GOVERNANCE.

The key goal of the internal quality assurance system (IQAS) is the development, effective operation and continuous improvement of the whole range of the Institution's activities, and particularly, of teaching, research, innovation, governance and relevant services, according to the international practices - especially those of the European Higher Education Area - and the HQA principles and guidelines described in these Standards.

Structure and organisation

In each Institution, the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) holds the responsibility for the administration and management of the IQAS. The QAU is set up according to the existing legislative framework and is responsible for:

- *the development of specialised policy, strategy and relevant processes towards the continuous improvement of the quality of the Institution's work and provisions;*
- *the organisation, operation and continuous improvement of the Institution's internal quality assurance system;*
- *the coordination and support of the evaluation process of the Institution's academic units and other services, and;*
- *the support of the external evaluation and accreditation process of the Institution's programmes and internal quality assurance system in the context of the HQA principles and guidelines.*

The Institution's IQAS and its implementation processes are determined by the decisions of the competent bodies, as provided by the law, and are published in the Government Gazette, as well as on the Institution's website. The above are reviewed every six years, at the latest.

To achieve the above goals, the QAU collaborates with HQA, develops and maintains a management information system to store the evaluation data, which are periodically submitted to HQA, according to the latter's instructions. The QAU is responsible for the systematic monitoring of the evaluation process and for the publication of evaluation-related procedures and their results on the Institution's website.

The QAU structure has been approved by the Institution's competent bodies, as provided by the law, while all competences and tasks accruing from this structure are clearly defined.

Operation

The Institution takes action for the design, establishment, implementation, audit and maintenance of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS), taking into account the Standards' requirements, while making any necessary amendments to ensure fitness to achieve its aims.

The above actions include:

- *provision of all necessary processes and procedures for the successful operation of the IQAS, as well as implementation of the above processes and procedures on all of the Institution's parties involved ;the Institution's areas of activity can constitute the IQAS processes, e.g. teaching, research and innovation, governance, services etc. An IQAS process is an area of activity including data input, data processing and outputs. A procedure defines the way an action is implemented and includes a course of stages or steps, e.g. the curriculum design procedure;*
- *determination of how the IQAS procedures / processes are audited, measured and assessed, and how they interact;*
- *provision of all necessary resources to enable the IQAS function.*

Documentation

The IQAS documentation includes, among other things, a series of key documents demonstrating its structure and organisation, such as the Quality Manual, which describes how the Standards' requirements are met.

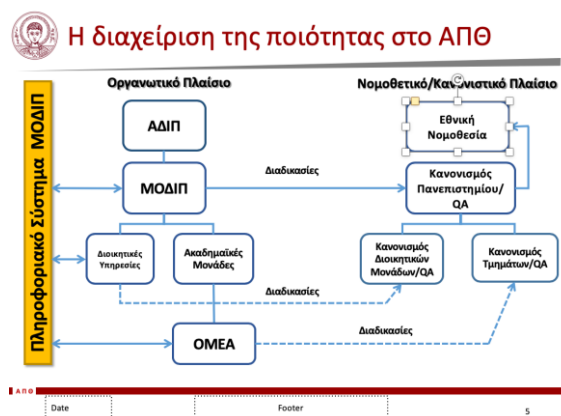
The Annexes of the Quality Manual include:

- the Quality Policy and the Quality Assurance Objectives;
- the necessary written Procedures, along with the entailed forms;
- the necessary Guides, External Documents (e.g. pertinent legislation), as well as any other supporting data;
- the standing organisational structure of the QAU, with a detailed description of the competences, the required qualifications and the goals for each post. The organisational chart is structured in a manner that ensures that the IQAS organisational requirements are fully and properly met.

Institution compliance

Our panel finds MODIP's website portal to be the most effective tool for communication and guidance for members of MODIP, OMEAs, and other within and outside AUTH stakeholders on quality assurance (<https://qa.auth.gr/el/home>). This site is a portal to many of the quality assurance processes and services. It would be desirable for each document and the website to reference any other document that forms the overall Quality Manual(s). These can be links on the MODIP web site with a properly defined map. For example, MODIP includes on the website Quality Policy and Quality assurance Objectives (<https://qa.auth.gr/el/node/7234>) but not in the booklet called "Εγχειρίδιο Ποιότητας." Document id "Α3. Εγχειρίδιο Ποιότητας ΕΣΔΠ-ΑΠΘ.pdf". This document is the Quality Assurance manual produced by MODIP. It is a comprehensive document and it will be very useful if it is available on the MODIP web site.

The IQAS quality manual provides the overall framework, a detailed list of all the appropriate actions for planning, implementation, and control of the internal processes. All the processes that are in place have been identified and reviewed by our panel and they took the form of: Powerpoint presentations during a site visit, access to the website, and provision of the manual. Key to all these procedures is the high level understanding the MODIP clearly has. Below is the flow chart of the relationships (from the MODIP Chair's presentation) that we find to be adequate evidence of comprehensive understanding.



The main document (A3. Εγχειρίδιο Ποιότητας ΕΣΔΠ-ΑΠΘ.pdf) should also include in Appendix E, which is the intended guidance that is now empty.

MODIP also defined 7 processes of the quality assurance system at AUTH that include:

1. Πολιτική διασφάλισης ποιότητας του ιδρύματος (Quality Assurance Policy)
2. Διάθεση και διαχείριση πόρων (Allocation and Management of Assets)
3. Θέσπιση στόχων διασφάλισης ποιότητας (Creation of Targets of Quality Assurance)
4. Εσωτερική αξιολόγηση (Internal Evaluation)
5. Συλλογή δεδομένων ποιότητας, μέτρηση, ανάλυση, βελτίωση (Data Collection, measurement, analysis, and improvement)
6. Δημοσιοποίηση πληροφοριών (Public Dissemination of Information)
7. Εξωτερική αξιολόγηση (External Evaluation)

For each of these processes, inputs and outputs have been described during the panel's site visit, and the sequence of interaction among processes has been described. Below is an example of the two-way interaction(s) among the processes (see Appendix Γ. Εντοπισμός και αλληλεπίδραση διεργασιών in A3. Εγχειρίδιο Ποιότητας ΕΣΔΠ-ΑΠΘ.pdf)

The role, structure and functions of ODIP have been clearly defined in the related documentation. On the other hand, MODIP has created a Quality Management System that effectively supports the necessary quality processes (see also assessment of Principle 6). Finally, MODIP is aware and takes actions in order to overcome negative attitudes by a part of the University community regarding the role of the current QA system.

A major concern of our panel is the lack of adequate staff support for IQAS but also the internal quality assurance groups (OMEA). The amount of work required for this effort, the assembly of information, and the continuous communication in a process like this needs full time staff support. MODIP estimates the need for three full time staff support persons. In addition, current financial support for IQAS activities comes from the special research account, which is not the appropriate funding mechanism.

Panel judgement

Principle 4: Structure, Organization and Operation of the IQAS	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- Provide additional funding to AUTh, eventually in the form of permanent staff, to support quality assurance activities with priority to the MODIP activity.
- Include all necessary quality assurance material in an integrated web portal.

Principle 5: Self-Assessment

THE INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM COMPRISES PROCEDURES PROVIDING THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ANNUAL SELF-ASSESSMENT OF THE INSTITUTION'S ACADEMIC AND ADMINISTRATIVE UNITS, ADDRESSING AREAS OF OVERSIGHTS OR SHORTCOMINGS, AND DEFINING REMEDIAL ACTIONS TOWARDS THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE SET GOALS, AND EVENTUAL IMPROVEMENT.

The QAU conducts, on an annual basis, a self-assessment of the IQAS, following the written procedure provided for each area of activity, which is implemented by a certain academic or administrative unit, as appropriate. The procedure determines the timing, the participants, the data under consideration, and the expected outcomes. The self-assessment aims at a final estimation of the suitability of the IQAS in force, as well as at basing decisions concerning the necessary remedial or precautionary actions for improvement.

The data considered in the context of the self-assessment of a programme may, for example, include:

- *students performance;*
- *feedback from students / teaching staff;*
- *assessment of learning outcomes;*
- *graduation rates;*
- *feedback from the evaluation of the facilities / learning environment;*
- *report of any remedial or precautionary actions undertaken;*
- *suggestions for improvement.*

The outcomes of the self-assessment are recorded in internal reports drawn up by the QAU. The reports identify any areas of deviation or non-compliance with the Standards, and are communicated to the interested parties (if appropriate). The Institution's resolutions concerning any modification, compliance, or enhancement of the IQAS operation might include actions related to:

- *the upgrade of the IQAS and the pertinent processes;*
- *the upgrade of the services offered to the students;*
- *the reallocation of resources;*
- *the introduction of new quality goals, etc.*

The outcomes of the self-assessment are recorded and, along with the source data, are archived as quality files.

A special procedure is followed for the compliance check of newly launched programmes (of all three cycles), or programmes that are to be reviewed shortly, prior to the institutional approval of the programme.

Institution compliance

AUTH has established a self-assessment mechanism in order to assure quality on an annual basis. The procedures are coordinated by MODIP that appoints the internal evaluation committees at the departmental and administrative unit levels. MODIP is also responsible for composing the evaluation questionnaires.

The results of the self-assessment are compiled and documented by MODIP and they are brought to the attention of the Rector and the Vice Rectors of the University in order to assess whether corrections or revisions are warranted. It is not clear though whether the results of the annual self-assessment are shared with other units within the University.

Based on the data that became available to our panel, it was determined that many important parameters were considered in the self-assessment studies. Those included various metrics related to the students' performance and graduation rates, feedback from students, assessment of learning outcomes that exhibited variability of completeness, and feedback from the evaluations regarding laboratories, libraries, other facilities and learning environments.

The outcome of the process was determined to be satisfactory based on upgrades in processes and student services, such as for example the creation of the student Ombudsperson, and introduction of new goals.

However, the accreditation panel felt that carrying out the strategic portion of the self-assessment on an annual basis is excessive because changes with strategic implications happen typically in larger time scales and this may force the various units of the university to go through the motions and potentially over- or under-state certain factors. On the other hand, monitoring numbers and metrics related to courses as well to student, faculty, and administrative activities should be automated and monitored on an annual basis.

Regardless of the frequency of the self-assessment, the quality of teaching and research needs to be quantified more precisely. It is not clear whether there is student input over and above a simple questionnaire. During the site visit our panel found that the students were eager to provide information and feedback. Also, it is not clear how the research output of the faculty is factored into the self-assessment. The accreditation report states that the quality of education is very high but is not quantified, and that the aim is to raise the rankings of the University as per Strategic Plan. Raising the University ranking is achieved partially by increasing the average quality of the graduating students and to a much greater extent by increasing the volume and quality of research.

Panel judgement

Principle 5: Self-Assessment	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- Strategic self-assessments need to be carried out on a bi-annual basis in order to allow for measurable changes to be observed.
- Students who participate actively in educational and research activities need to be consulted through confidential interviews in order to improve the educational quality of AUTH.

- The quality of education needs to be evaluated and documented based on metrics by monitoring the careers of the AUTh graduates.
- The research input and output of the faculty need to be evaluated on a periodic basis by implementing internationally established best practices.

Principle 6: Collection of Quality Data: Measuring, Analysis and Improvement

INSTITUTIONS ARE FULLY RESPONSIBLE FOR THE COLLECTION, ANALYSIS AND USE OF INFORMATION IN AN INTEGRATED, FUNCTIONAL AND READILY ACCESSIBLE MANNER, AIMING AT THE EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT OF THE QUALITY DATA RELATED TO TEACHING, RESEARCH AND OTHER ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES, AS WELL AS OF THOSE RELATED TO THE ADMINISTRATION.

The QAU should establish and operate an information system to manage the data required for the implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System.

The QAU measures and monitors the performance of the various activities of the Institution, through appropriate procedures established in the context of the IQAS structure, and assesses their level of effectiveness. The measuring and monitoring is conducted on a basis of indices and data provided by HQA in the pertinent guidelines and forms, which are part of the National Information System for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (NISQA). These measurements may concern: the size of the student body, the size of the teaching and administrative staff, the infrastructure, the structural components of the curricula, students' performance, research activity performance, financial data, feedback on student and faculty satisfaction surveys, data related to the teaching and research activity, services, infrastructure, etc.

The QAU makes use of the figures and presents the results for consideration using statistical analysis. Outcomes are displayed through histograms and charts. This sort of information is used by the Institution for decision making, at all levels, pursuing improvement, as well as for setting, monitoring, assessing and reviewing the Institution's strategic and operational goals.

Institution compliance

AUTH has developed an integrated information system (QMS - Quality Management System), interconnected to and fed with data from multiple existing institutional databases (such as SIS – Student Information System), external scientific databases (such as Scopus). On the other hand, QMS allows the enrichment of the quality data through different modules, specifically developed by MODIP. Finally, QMS produces outputs either directly to the final users (such as department chairs) or to other systems (such as the tables included in the self-assessment reports). QMS seems to be a well designed and implemented system that has been extensively used by the AUTH users and considered for adoption by other institutions. Therefore, it can be assured that such QMS greatly contributes to the data collection, analysis and provision process.

Moreover, it has been acknowledged that QMS requires an update (or even a major redesign: “καταστήσει επιτακτική την ανάγκη επανασχεδιασμού του προκειμένου η λειτουργία του να είναι βιώσιμη και να συμβαδίζει με την ανάπτυξη της πληροφορικής υποδομής του Ιδρύματος” (A1)). Our panel finds that the redesign is positive, especially if this implies the development of a new data warehouse or a major alignment with the central Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) services of the institution. However, it has been pointed out that frequent changes on the requirements, forms, etc. by ADIP may impose additional complications to the sustainability of the QMS. Overall, our panel finds that the supporting ICT infrastructure (QMS) is very good and is aligned with the high quality of the AUTH ICT services.

The issue of accuracy and reliability of the data used by MODIP and stored by the QMS is highly important. It is recommended that all data undergo a major accuracy and reliability check (e.g. the percentage of students on internships in the self-assessment form). Automatic collection and crosscheck of these data items is actively pursued by AUTH and can help improve reliability and confidence in the numbers. (e.g., the existing action of data crosscheck (AUTH Annex A1, p.34)).

In addition to the formal student evaluation surveys on courses, or by the administrative staff, some initiatives have been undertaken on student/staff satisfaction and suggestions, e.g., ImproveMyCampus (<https://improvemycampus.auth.gr/>) in 2018-2019 or the survey of the Food Services (Φοιτητική Λεσχη) users. Such actions showed to be useful and effective. The involvement by all relevant stakeholders (students, administrative staff, professors, alumni, etc.) could be further enhanced using similar actions.

The new Quality Manual describes the procedures for data analysis supporting decision-making. Our panel had the opportunity to review samples of data analysis and reports of decisions made using these data (e.g., data collected are embedded in the self-assessment forms and processes; several decisions by the AUTH senate or other institutional bodies have considered and employed the raw data and the associated quality metrics). These processes are not fully documented. The same issue holds for any comparative studies that should be undertaken by the AUTH bodies on the basis of data analysis, graphs, trends, etc.

It should be noted that data from the departmental infrastructure could not be collected centrally and systematically by MODIP, although the central infrastructure data could be properly monitored. On the other hand, the process related to Study Programmes has been adequately developed, especially during the submission, review and approval phases (Annex A9.6). Moreover, funding allocation is based on an unambiguous algorithm based on data. Human resource allocation is based on data analysis, albeit employing in a less clear process.

Finally, there is some evidence that quality data collected in these processes and internal reviews have been employed for the strategic and operational goals of AUTH. However, such data exploitation has not been fully and formally applied in the newly approved 2019-2022 Strategic Plan. It is expected that the processes clearly and precisely defined in the recently approved AUTH Quality Manual (Annex A3) will be used in the revision and adaptation phases of the strategic plan and actions.

Overall, AUTH compliance to this principle is high. The existing QMS and the new Quality Manual are expected to further enhance such compliance, especially through its extensive use in data accuracy and reliability, stakeholder satisfaction and documentation of the analysis and improvement processed based on the collected data.

Panel judgement

Principle 6: Collection of Data: Measuring, Analysis & Improvement	
6.1 Study Programmes / education activities	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
6.2 Research & Innovation	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
6.3 Activities related to the administration (funding, human resources, infrastructure management)	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
6.4 Human Resources	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Principle 6: Collection of Data: Measuring, Analysis & Improvement (overall)	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- Continue the work on updating and aligning the QMS with the institutional ICT system.
- Enhance and assure effective coordination with the HQA information system.
- Detect all data items that are prone to accuracy and reliability errors, and provide efficient (eventually automatic) support for enhancement and crosscheck of accuracy and reliability.
- Expand the stakeholder satisfaction and proposal surveys, in order to widen their involvement in the quality processes.
- Apply the recently approved Quality Manual guidelines in the data collection, analysis and improvement processes.
- Expand the data collection to include non-central facilities and infrastructures.

Principle 7: Public Information

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD PUBLISH INFORMATION ABOUT THEIR TEACHING AND ACADEMIC ACTIVITIES IN A DIRECT AND ACCESSIBLE MANNER. ALL PERTINENT INFORMATION SHOULD BE UP-TO-DATE, CLEAR AND OBJECTIVE.

The QAU publishes data related to IQAS structure, organisation and operation. Furthermore, the QAU publishes data pertinent to the institutional quality policy and objectives, as well as information and data relevant to the Institution's internal and external evaluation. In the context of the self-assessment process, the QAU verifies that adequate information regarding the teaching activities and, particularly, the programmes' profile and the overall institutional activity is publicly available. QAU makes recommendations for improvement, where appropriate.

Institution compliance

AUTH is compliant with regard to the provision of public information. Substantial information pertinent to the academic and research activities is available online at the central website and at the departmental and laboratory websites. Similar to institutions elsewhere, there is variability of the quantity and quality of content which is neither surprising nor deficient.

The Deans of the schools we met mentioned that their programmes are listed on the web; the committee did not investigate many programmes and department websites. Students mentioned that all information they need for the programme of study, course assessments, course information, etc. can easily be found and none of them mentioned any issues in this regard (e.g., <https://qa.auth.gr/el/studyguide>).

Our panel performed spot checks of IQAS online (<https://qa.auth.gr/el/home>) information availability as well as information about the mission statement, quality assurance information and past assessments. The pertinent information was listed in a clear and discoverable manner. The Deans also mentioned that the departments, programmes and schools are compliant with these. However, the 11 undergraduate students and 12 graduate students our panel met, had little idea and basically no interest in this type of information; none of them had intentionally looked for or visited these sites. (Based on our experience, this is a normal reaction. However, the issue of student involvement in the accreditation process is an important concern that is discussed elsewhere in this report)

IQAS provides the external and internal evaluation reports on the institution's website. The external reports are available for all (<https://qa.auth.gr/el/ExtEvalReports>) and the internal evaluation reports (self-assessment) are available with a username and password. An example is shown below.

Έκθεση Αυτοαξιολόγησης



Τμήμα	Θεολογίας
Επίπεδο Σπουδών	Προπτυχιακό
Πρόγραμμα Σπουδών	ΠΠΣ Τμήματος Θεολογίας (2013 έως σήμερα)
Ακαδημαϊκό Έτος	2017-2018

Κατάσταση Έκθεσης: Προσωρινή

Ποσοστό Συμπλήρωσης Υποχρεωτικών Πεδίων: 99%

A/A	Ενότητα	Κατάσταση
1	Ιστορικό	Υποβλήθηκε
2	Περιγραφή Προγράμματος Σπουδών	Υποβλήθηκε
3	Περιγράμματα Μαθημάτων	
4	Οργάνωση Εκπαιδευτικού Έργου	Υποβλήθηκε
5	Ερευνητικό Έργο Τμήματος	Υποβλήθηκε
6	Υποδομές – Υποστηρικτικές Υπηρεσίες	Υποβλήθηκε
7	Διοίκηση και Στρατηγική Ακαδημαϊκής Ανάπτυξης	Υποβλήθηκε
8	Πίνακες	Υποβλήθηκε
9	Βιογραφικά	
10	Δημοσιεύσεις	
11	Συζήτηση / Σχολιασμός	
	Παράρτημα	Υποβλήθηκε
	Παρατηρήσεις	

Overall this is a principle that AUTH fulfills. The central AUTH accreditation information website is comprehensive and updated, as of this review, and it is hoped that this will continue in the future.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- AUTH must ensure that all departments, programmes and research labs and centers have websites with updated academic and research information, and their corresponding accreditation information is linked to the AUTH accreditation site.
- It is also recommended that HQA resists the urge for continuous changes of accreditation requirements because it goes against standardization and generation of comparable data over time.
- There have been instances where institution and HQA data are in discord. This suggests that the data processing algorithms and assumptions may be different. HQA should focus on clarity and standardization so outcomes across institutions are reliably comparable.

Principle 8: External Evaluation and Accreditation of the IQAS

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD BE PERIODICALLY EVALUATED BY COMMITTEES OF EXTERNAL EXPERTS SET BY HQA, FOR THE PURPOSE OF ACCREDITATION OF THEIR INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEMS (IQAS). THE PERIODICITY OF THE EXTERNAL EVALUATION IS DETERMINED BY HQA.

External quality assurance, in the case in point external evaluation aiming at accreditation, may act as a means of verification of the effectiveness of the Institution's internal quality assurance, and as a catalyst for improvement, while opening new perspectives. Additionally, it can provide information with a view to public acknowledgement of the positive course of the Institution's activities.

The Higher Education Institutions engage in periodic external quality assurance which is conducted taking into consideration any special requirements set by the legislation governing the operation of the Institutions and their academic units.

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

Institution compliance

AUTH is substantially in compliance and substantially engaged with the principle of external evaluation. It did receive a meritorious review in 2015 and it did produce an undated progress report in 2018 (file A.10) with specific ratings of accomplishment or task fulfillment ranging from 0% to 100% and averaging approximately at 50%. Certainly, several goals and targets are affected by state budget allocations, all of which have been unfavorable in the last several years. Given that such progress report may serve as an instrument for reflection, improvement and communication between the different stakeholders, it might be enhanced through a more detailed annex providing links to the supporting evidence or explanation of actions and results.

The Deans our panel met were unanimous about their school and department positive participation in the accreditation processes without major resistance; all noted substantial positive change in the last ten years. Some mentioned discontent about external and constantly changing requirements such as EU directives, national legislation and HQA changes.

AUTH has established a process of substantial internal stakeholder involvement in the accreditation, strategic planning and implementation processes. It is important that the feedback processes remain active, continuous and the changes made are recorded and evaluated.

The involvement of external stakeholders appears to be real. The stakeholders we met were enthusiastic and eager to be involved with AUTH but they had little knowledge about the progress made after the prior evaluation and about the strategic plan. AUTH administration informed us that the plan only recently had been finalized and the external stakeholder involvement had begun.

The accreditation panel felt that the engagement of the undergraduate and graduate student body is insufficient. We were told that representatives of formal student bodies have refused to participate in the accreditation process. However, this should not stop the institution and

schools from surveying or inviting students to participate in information sharing and feedback sessions.

Panel judgement

Principle 8: External Evaluation & Accreditation of the IQAS	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- The accreditation panel received information that some routine student participation at the department level does occur, but more needs to be done to engage students consistently at the department level and at least occasionally at the institutional level.
- External stakeholders and the newly established AUTH Alumni Association are useful assets that should be utilized more in the quality assessment and strategic planning of the institution.
- The HQA mandated annual data collection likely causes substantial consumption of time and is likely less useful for many strategic indices; this should be done on a biannual basis.
- A well-documented and comprehensive progress report may serve as an instrument for effective reflection among stakeholders, further involvement in the follow up process, and eventually lead to quality improvement.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

AUTH is a comprehensive University with 41 departments and one of the largest in SouthEast Europe. It has been offering high quality education for nearly one century. It is important to recognize that over the years the University survived and excelled despite ever changing external and internal factors. The AUTH leadership, faculty, staff and MODIP made a heroic effort to develop the quality assurance processes and ensure the continued improvement of the academic standing of AUTH.

Our panel identified major external threats to quality assurance that are:

- The significant reduction of public funding and the restrictions in pursuing alternative funding, constitute a significant threat to the successful operation and improvement of AUTH.
- Financial and programmatic independence of the institution is of paramount importance for quality assurance and ability to reach excellence. Constant changes in regulations and imposed constraints make it impossible to provide the necessary resources (human and otherwise).
- The inadequacy of the available funds for operations impacts both the working environment and human resources areas.

I. Features of Good Practice

- The available resources for funding the infrastructure are managed efficiently and creatively. The processes are clearly described in the manual and implemented effectively.
- AUTH established a policy and a process that is appropriate for its size and diversity of the specialties. The policy complies with the laws and regulations that govern the Institution.
- The 2019-2022 strategic plan has been produced, and the incoming administration pledged to continue adding a new initiative for strategic action plan.
- AUTH has appropriate well thought out and transparent processes for allocating the available funds towards the infrastructure, teaching and research needs of each department. AUTH needs are documented with plans for improvement.
- The Institution has clear and explicit goals towards improving the quality of education, research, administrative functions, and infrastructure. The list of actions and goals are aligned well with the Strategic Plan.
- MODIP's website is the most effective tool for communication and guidance for internal and external stakeholders on quality assurance.
- MODIP has established a comprehensive and well-structured self-assessment mechanism.

- The outcome of the self-assessment process is effective based on upgrades in procedures, student services and introduction of new goals.
- The Quality Management System (QMS) is well designed and the implemented system has been extensively used by the AUTH users and well aligned with the overall high quality of AUTH ICT services.
- A good effort has been made to create a Quality Assurance process for Study Programmes.
- Funding allocation is based on an unambiguous algorithm based on information collected through the data management system.
- AUTH is compliant with regard to the provision of public information.
- The central AUTH accreditation information website is comprehensive and updated.
- External stakeholders were enthusiastic and eager to be involved with AUTH and their involvement is substantive.
- The Academic units leadership was unanimous about their school and department positive participation in the Quality Assurance processes; all noted substantial positive change in the last ten years.

II. Areas of Weakness

- A timid attempt is made to communicate quality assurance reviews, assessments, and outcomes to students and external stakeholders.
- Student involvement is not clear in the quality assurance process.
- The proposed goals for quality assurance appear to be ambitious and more qualitative than quantitative.
- Lack of adequate staff support for IQAS process the internal quality assurance groups (MODIP and OMEA).
- The self-assessment on an annual basis is excessive when it comes to strategic metrics.
- Analysis and improvement procedures based on quality data has not been always documented.
- The progress report is incomplete.
- External stakeholders had little knowledge about the progress made after the prior evaluation and about the strategic plan.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- Identify key factors that impact the University rankings and prioritize strategies to improve them.
- Develop a concise set of indicators that can be used for assessing the faculty performance recognizing fundamental differences among all disciplines.
- Detect all data items that are prone to accuracy and reliability errors and provide efficient (eventually automatic) support for enhancement and crosscheck of accuracy and reliability.
- Expand the stakeholder satisfaction and proposal surveys, in order to widen their involvement in the quality processes.

- Develop a meaningful student engagement process focusing on the campus/student life over and above classroom activities and teaching evaluations.
- Analyze student feedback regarding course grading by the faculty, identify outliers, and explore ways to mitigate existing issues that affect negatively teaching practices and effectiveness.
- Develop an external stakeholder engagement process that leverages existing relationships and focused on quality assurance.
- Leverage the alumni network to support and receive input about quality assurance and accreditation.
- The research input and output of the faculty need to be evaluated periodically by implementing internationally established best practices.
- An appropriate annual evaluation needs to be conducted for all personnel in order to benefit the overall quality assurance processes.
- ATh must ensure that all departments, programmes, research labs and centers have websites with updated academic and research information with corresponding accreditation information linking to the ATh accreditation site.
- A well-documented and comprehensive bi-annual quality assurance progress report may serve as an instrument for effective reflection among stakeholders, further involvement in the follow up process, and eventually lead to quality improvement.
- Suitable quality indexes based on established international procedures need to be developed in order to assess both education and research.
- Quality control of all data in QMS need to be enforced in order to assure accuracy and reliability.
- Progress report will benefit from a detailed annex, providing links to the supporting evidence or explanation of actions and results.
- Provide MODIP with additional staff to support the Quality Assurance and Accreditation functions.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are:

- Principle 1: Institution Policy for Quality Assurance.
- Principle 2: Provision and Management of the Necessary Resources.
- Principle 4: Structure, Organisation and Operation of the IQAS
- Principle 5: Self-Assessment
- Principle 7: Public Information

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are:

- Principle 3: Establishing Goals for Quality Assurance
- Principle 6: Collection of Quality Data: Measuring, Analysis and Improvement
- Principle 8: External Evaluation and Accreditation of the IQAS

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are:

None

The Principles where failure of compliance was identified are:

None

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

**The members of the Accreditation Panel for the IQAS of the Aristotle University of
Thessaloniki**

Name and Surname

Signature

- **Dr Kiki Ikossi (Chair)**, George Mason University, Fairfax, USA.

- **Prof. Yannis Dimitradis**, Universidad de Valladolid, Spain.

- **Prof. Fokion Egolfopoulos**, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, USA.

- **Prof. Konstadinos Goulias**, University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB), USA.

- **Prof. Panos Prevedouros**, University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, USA.