Accreditation Report

for the Undergraduate Study Programme of:

Greek Philology

Institution: Democritus University of Thrace

Date: 9 November 2019

Report of the Panel appointed by the HQA to undertake the review of the Undergraduate Study Programme of **Greek Philology** of the **Democritus University of Thrace** for the purposes of granting accreditation

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PART A: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW

I.   The Accreditation Panel

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the Undergraduate Study Programme of **Greek Philology** of the **Democritus University of Thrace** comprised the following three (3) members, drawn from the HQA Register, in accordance with the Law 4009/2011:

1. **Professor Stephanos Efthymiadis** (Chair)
   Open University of Cyprus, Cyprus

2. **Assoc. Professor Alicia Morales Ortiz**
   University of Murcia, Spain

3. **Assoc. Professor Spyridon Tzounakas**
   University of Cyprus, Cyprus

II.   Review Procedure and Documentation

Prior to their meeting in Athens, the members of the Accreditation Panel (henceforth: AP) had studied several documents provided by HQA, such as:

a) the Department's Proposal for Accreditation

b) the 2014 External Evaluation Report

c) the Study Programmes (*Odigoi Spoudon*) and the description of courses offered in consecutive academic years

c) the HQA Guidelines

d) other relevant information about the Department (statistical data, samples of student questionnaires, strategic goals, etc.)

Additionally, the AP consulted the Department's Webpage.

The AP's visit for the evaluation of the Undergraduate Study Programme of the Department of Greek Philology of the Democritus University of Thrace began on 4 November 2019 at 9.30 with a briefing by Prof. P. Kyprianos, President of HQA, and Dr. C. Besta, General Director of HQA, in which standards and guidelines of the accreditation process were presented and discussed. A Power Point presentation with all the relevant information was provided to AP members. In the evening of the same day the AP members flew to Alexandroupolis and were transferred to Komotini by car after arrangement was made by the University.

The site visit to the Department of Greek Philology, located at the campus of the Democritus University of Thrace, took place on Tuesday 5 November (from 9.30 to 18.15) and on Wednesday 6 November 2019 (from 9.30 to 13.15). It consisted of different consecutive meetings with members of the MODIP, the teaching and administrative staff, students, alumni and stakeholders, and comprised visits to lecture classes, offices, laboratories and the library of the Department. More precisely, the AP had interviews with:

a. The President of MODIP (Vice-Rector Prof. Zoe Gavriilidou) and the Head of the Department (Prof. M. Tziatzi)

b. OMEA members and MODIP representatives

c. Teaching staff members (16 DEP, EDIP & EEP members)

d. Eleven (11) undergraduate students

e. Eight (8) graduates

f. Seven (7) employers and social partners, variously supporting the work and activity of the Department in Komotini town

On Wednesday 6 November the AP had a closure meeting with the MODIP and OMEA members at which the impressions, observations and preliminary conclusions of the AP were presented. At the evening of the same day the AP members were transferred to the airport and flew back to Athens.

All meetings were held in a spirit of collaboration and readiness to assist with the work of the AP. Its members would like to acknowledge the MODIP and Department's hospitality.

III.   Study Programme Profile

The Department of Greek Philology was founded in 1993 and received its first students in the academic year 1995-1996. Ever since it has formed part of the School of Classical Studies and the Humanities. It gained autonomy in 2008 and informally it is divided into three Sections: a. Classical Studies; b. Byzantine and Modern Greek Studies; and c. Linguistics. Accordingly, it now leads to the acquisition of a Bachelor's Degree with a specialization in one of the above three fields: a. Classics (Ancient Greek and Latin); b. Byzantine and Modern Greek Philology; and c. Linguistics. The last specialization started to be offered as an autonomous field in the academic year 2018-2019. The Department also operates and supports four laboratories: Laboratory of Modern Greek Philology, Laboratory of Linguistics, Laboratory of Papyrology-Palaeography and the Laboratory *Hans and Niki Eideneier* specializing in the Study of Early Modern Greek literature.

The Department currently employs twenty-three (23) DEP members, two (2) EDIP and one (1) EEP members. According to its programmatic statement, it cultivates and promotes the study of Classical, Byzantine, and Modern Greek Philology and Linguistics through academic teaching and scholarly research. Its aim is to study and carry out research on the various cultural and intellectual manifestations of Hellenism diachronically. Its students are provided with the essential knowledge and skills that will advance their scholarly and professional career.

The Bachelor is a four-year degree comprising 8 semesters and corresponding to 240 ECTS. Its holder must successfully attend 40 courses, each of which corresponds to 6 ECTS.

The Department receives ca. 250 students every year and in the period from 2013 to 2019 it has comprised from 1138 to 1083 students as a whole.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

Principle 1: Academic Unit Policy for Quality Assurance

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

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

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

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

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

Study Programme compliance

Following MODIP's instructions and in close cooperation with it, the Department steadily follows a Policy for Quality Assurance with regard to teaching and research. MODIP's instructions are in line with the requirements of ADIP and the European Standards for Higher Education.

The Internal Evaluation Committee (OMEA) comprises five members of the academic staff of the Department and one student. This Committee is responsible for coordinating the

efforts of the Department for the composition of the annual internal assessment report submitted to MODIP. The latter collects findings and proceeds to making comments and suggestions. The AP considers that the document which reflects this procedure is confined to mere statements and must extend to detailed reports filled with comments, graphs, etc. Should it be shaped so, it would give a better picture of the Department's activities and achievements.

The Department also provides numerical data concerning the teaching staff (increase/decrease), the students enrolled and the administrative staff. This is displayed in a sequence of pdf documents uploaded only on the MODIP's webpage and not on the Department's. The last available such report of internal evaluation process covers the academic year 2018-2019. The AP would wish to see the documents of internal self-evaluation report appear on the Department's website.

At any rate, the results of this report are presented and discussed in the Department Council which takes responsibility for undertaking actions to improve the teaching and research effectiveness of the Department.

In 2014 the Department underwent an external evaluation process in accordance with the standards and procedures established by ADIP. The Department's proposal for accreditation reports that all recommendations that could be accomplished by the Department alone were approved and fully adopted. By contrast, those recommendations that had to do with actions to be taken by or in agreement with external authorities (e.g. the Ministry of Education or the University) have not materialized.

Courses and teachers are constantly submitted to the evaluation of students who are invited to fill out satisfaction questionnaires. All in all, students hold a positive opinion about the Study Programme (4,03/5) and reserve high marks for teachers and teaching (at a percentage of 72% - 4,47/5). Since academic year 2018-2019 the whole process of evaluation has been operating electronically. Despite the simplicity and quickness of the process, the percentage of student participation remains rather modest, not exceeding the 40%.

As the Department's Accreditation Proposal has it, in the assessment of learning outcomes and in the process of renewing the curriculum, the opinion of graduates and external stakeholders is being taken into a serious consideration. More flexible ways of evaluating a student's performance in a course are introduced whereas it is the Department's endeavour to extend or reduce the courses' syllabi, auxiliary teaching, hours of study, etc. The enthusiastic

feelings vis-à-vis the Department of the students interviewed by the AP overshadowed any attempt of its members to pinpoint shortcomings or areas requiring improvement. The same enthusiasm was shared by the alumni and stakeholders involved in the process of evaluation.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The information available on the website about Department's Policy for Quality Assurance should be improved. In particular, the internal evaluation reports must be published regularly.

The Department/ MODIP should more firmly encourage the participation of students in the evaluation process.

Principle 2: Design and Approval of Programmes

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

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

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

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

Study Programme compliance

Following the suggestions of the external evaluation committee in 2014, the Department reduced the number of courses required for the Bachelor degree (*ptychio*) to forty (40). The Programme is divided into two distinctive sections of study called *zones*. *Zone A* corresponds to the first four semesters where only core courses are offered to be attended by all students. Z*one B* is made up of the four last semesters where students should select a number of optional courses, some of which must be conforming to the specialization (one of the three) they have decided to follow. Apart from courses pertaining to other specializations within the Programme of the Department, students may choose courses offered by other Departments within the School of Classical Studies and the Humanities. A prácticum (*praktiki askisi*) is provided for fourth-year students. Through and thanks to its laboratories the Department cares for engaging more and more students in collaborations with externally and internally funded projects.

The Programme of the Department is subjected to a periodic renewal also in consideration of the teaching staff's availability. It is commendable that the teaching staff is keen on offering new courses every other academic year. As a result, the Programme covers a variety of topics without losing its coherence. It fulfills the International Standards for each area of study and, by and large, is in line with recent developments in scholarship.

The Programme is designed according to the following considerations:

a. A regular concern and procedure for the approval and revision of the courses taught. Subjects of the courses are drawn from the Analytical Programme which includes all courses deemed as necessary for the acquisition of knowledge and skills required for the completion of studies at the precise Department. This Analytical Programme is very rich indeed in its display of fields and topics but hard to pursue on a regular and realistic basis.

b. Degree is obtained after a successful attendance of forty (40) courses, each of which corresponds to six (6) ECTS. The Department believes that these ECTS reflect the student's adequate and in-depth knowledge of the course taught. Surprisingly, courses supported by mandatory tutorials also correspond to six (6) ECTS. Neither seminars nor a BA thesis *(ptychiaki ergasia)* are integrated in the curriculum. If introduced, they should be credited with a number of ECTS higher than that of ordinary courses.

c. The structure of curriculum aims to enforce the educational background of the freshers whose performance in the admission exams is generally low. As a result, the curriculum runs smoothly and with a progressive degree of difficulty. Before the beginning of the fifth semester students must select the specialization that they will follow in the so-called *zone B*.

d. Link of teaching and research: the Department favours its members' participation in international conferences and fora and has been in a dialogue with other Philology departments in the country to inquire, for instance, into the nature and number of the courses taught. This extroversion will no doubt strengthen the research profile and teaching skills of the Department's members and will, sooner or later, provide its creative effects on its overall identity.

e. To provide work experience to students: the Department offers the possibility to students to undertake internships in external public and private institutions.

As any Philology Department in Greece, the Study Programme directs its students to acquiring the teaching skills suiting for a career in secondary education. Nonetheless, the crisis that has affected the labour market in recent years would make it worth considering to introduce new subjects in the curriculum that might enlarge the professional potential of its graduates. The skills of some DEP members with modern technologies and engagement in activities parallel to teaching (seminars, summer schools, theatre performances etc.) can be further explored with regard to this point.

Finally, both undergraduate students and alumni noted the absence of offering modern language courses (English, French or other) in the present Programme. The Department could integrate them in the curriculum whether as core courses or otherwise.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The AP notes the solidity and coherence of the offered courses which are periodically revised and renewed. However, it recommends that the Department consider capitalizing on the more practical training of its students, which could be enforced with seminars, practicums, and BA theses, i.e. modules proper for improving the research profile of its graduates.

The AP acknowledges the Department's endeavour to develop contacts and build up ties with the local society and the above initiatives will provide further opportunities for all its members (teaching staff and students).

The AP recommends a review of the Study Guide in particular points. For the wrong impression it might create, the catalogue of courses offered should appear less extensive than it looks now, and, for the courses already taught, academic years in which they were offered must be specified.

The Department should also seriously consider integrating courses on History (Ancient, Byzantine and Modern) and Philosophy (chiefly Greek and Roman) into *Zone A*.

Principle 3: Student- centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment

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

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

The student-centred learning and teaching process

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

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

Study Programme compliance

The Department is fully aware of the weaknesses of the students enrolled and has taken measures in order to meet the issue. For healing this weakness, the Department has sought precious assistance chiefly from postgraduate students. As far as Ancient Greek and Latin are concerned, the latter provide additional tutorials and guidance in classes arranged in small groups so that this serious lacuna is no longer an obstacle to the training of a philologist-to-be.

The number of students who enter the Philology Department has remained quite high (ca. 250 each year), while the number of members of the teaching staff has rather remained unchanged (from 24 to 23). In view of this imbalance, the Ministry of Education, after the recommendation of the Department, must consider either decreasing the number of incoming students or increasing the number of the teaching staff.

Students are evaluated much more through exams in lecture-based courses than after submitting written essays following oral presentations in the class. It is advisable that such alternative criteria for a student's evaluation be adopted by more members of the teaching staff as these produce more solid learning outcomes.

Despite the existence of large audiences, the Department operates in a much friendly atmosphere between teaching staff and students. The e-class has been well-integrated in the daily life and the whole system of teacher-and-student communication. The AP finds the one-month period (from mid-October to mid-November) allotted to students for enrolling in their elective courses too long and falling-in too late within the framework of the semester.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

A more reasonable ratio between teachers and students must be established.

The methods of evaluating students' performance must be more diverse in order to enhance knowledge and skills.

Principle 4: Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification

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

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

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

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

Study Programme compliance

The Study Programme follows the institution's published regulations covering all aspects and phases of studies (admission, progression, recognition and certification). Admission to the Programme is based on the results of the general examinations designed and organized by the Ministry of Education. Due to its location, the Department also admits students from the Muslim minority in Thrace, who are enrolled in Greek universities according to special provisions. The Programme can also attract international students or students wishing to obtain a second degree, but in the last years these categories are under-represented. The total number of incoming students is high (ca. 250 students per year) but this is a matter of general policy of the Greek state. During the last years the level of the incoming students is, in general, less than satisfactory. The Department attempts to remedy this problem by introducing tutorials that support the students in obtaining a smoother transition from high school to the demands of a Higher Education Programme.

The Department is committed to ensure its students' progression and follows electronic monitoring mechanisms through the e-class platform. Academic advising is now being introduced for the incoming students, and this is a good practice highly recommended by the AP.

Students' mobility is highly encouraged (the Department has signed a lot of Erasmus+ learning agreements). Although the number of the outcoming Erasmus students varies from a year to another, the general impression is that student mobility in this Department exceeds the average

level in Greek Universities. The ECTS applies across the curriculum and thus appropriate recognition procedures rely on institutional practice for recognition of credits among various European academic Departments and Institutions, in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.

Practical training constitutes an important component of the Programme and stands for a mandatory course that allows the students to develop job-oriented and broader skills. The Department's network includes significant social, cultural and productive bodies. This network could be further enriched and the Department seems to do its best in this direction.

The Department provides students with a Diploma Supplement after successfully completing their undergraduate studies. This Diploma is issued in both Greek and English without request for all graduates.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Since in recent years a large number of students enter the undergraduate programme with limited knowledge of Ancient Greek and Latin, the Department has to increase its support for them with more and better organized tutorials before, perhaps, considering an update of its curriculum.

The Programme's network that supports the practical training of the students should be further enriched.

The Department is to be commended for introducing academic advising for its incoming students, its mentoring mechanisms and for its support to students' mobility. These good practices, however, should continue and be backed by all the teaching staff members.

Principle 5: Teaching Staff

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

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

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

Study Programme compliance

Teaching staff is recruited according to the procedures set up by the Ministry of Education. The Department seems to follow them in a clear and transparent way. The high number of candidates indicates that there is trust in the processes. Policies to attract highly qualified academic staff are not different from those in other Greek Universities, while internal departmental incentives to attract qualified teaching staff are not offered.

Most members of the teaching staff are research-active and properly qualified. They are eager to strengthen the link between research and teaching. Since research and teaching skills are taken into account for the promotion of staff, the importance of teaching and research seems to be recognized.

The use of new technology in classroom is satisfactory and innovation of teaching methods is encouraged. However, the members of the staff are not exposed to training courses that would enable them to achieve the process of teaching according to modern innovative practices. The scheduled foundation of the new Centre for Teaching and Learning is expected to enrich the staff's teaching skills even more. The members of the teaching staff are regularly (every semester) evaluated by their students (now through electronic questionnaires).

The teaching workload of the teaching staff is similar to that of their colleagues both nationally and internationally and does not impede their engagement in research activities. However, the staff's research activities seem to have been affected by the Department's significant contribution to the local society (e.g. popularized lectures for a varied public or participation in local events) which is a very time-consuming task.

Teaching staff mobility mainly relies on the opportunities offered by the large number of the Department's Erasmus teaching agreements. The vast majority of the staff is right in complaining that they do not receive adequate support for their professional development. For instance, the Department's budget for acquisition of new books is very low (less than 6,000 euros per year). Although the Department endeavours to develop a comprehensive research strategy and increase the quality and quantity of the research output within the academic unit, its research profile should be further enhanced. The Department's goal to increase the number of publications in non-refereed journals ('5.2 Αύξηση μέσου συνολικού πλήθους εργασιών σε επιστημονικά περιοδικά χωρίς κριτές ανά μέλος Δ.Ε.Π'), as depicted in file Π.5 ('Παράρτημα V – Προγραμματισμός-Χρονοδιάγραμμα στόχων του Τ.Ε.Φ.-Δ.Π.Θ.') p. 8, is dated. A few members of the staff have so far obtained impressive research funding, but the general impression is that more research projects should be secured in the near future.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Increase the support for staff's professional development.

Enhance the staff's research output and profile.

Offer to staff members training courses on teaching and learning.

Principle 6: Learning Resources and Student Support

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

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

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

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

Study Programme compliance

Although the academic unit does its best to ensure an appropriate teaching and learning environment, there is room for further improvement. The Department provides the necessary facilities (classrooms, laboratories, library, study rooms, IT infrastructure, dormitories), but their current condition is not always satisfactory. For example, transport service from the campus to Komotini town and vice versa should be improved. The same holds with the dormitories. The departmental library has been the recipient of significant donations in the recent years, but it is still poor in its collections. In its report, the External Evaluation Committee of 2014 mentioned some serious security problems on the campus, e.g. stray dogs, poorly lit roads. Despite efforts made, these problems have not been remedied yet.

The Department must meet the issue of electronic resources (TLG, JSTOR, etc.) and their availability for both the teaching staff and the students. The University must simplify its system of getting access to important tools of modern research.

Institutions dealing with psychological and social support of the students have been successfully established. All in all, the information and communication services or the counselling services are well organized. The students get informed about the available services, which are easily accessed by them. The administrative staff should be commended for their efforts to ensure the smooth operation of the student support services.

The AP was informed that in the next few years the Department will move to a new building and hopefully many of the problems mentioned above will be sorted out.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Supply the academic unit with adequate funding to cover teaching and learning needs.

Enrich the departmental library with new acquisitions.

Ensure the safety and security of the campus as well as the living conditions of the dormitories.

Principle 7: Information Management

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

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

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

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

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

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

Study Programme compliance

The Department has a good system in place for gathering and processing information regarding key performance indicators, student progression, student population profile, teaching staff and Department's activities (research, publications, conferences, etc.). The Computer System of Quality Assurance of the University centralizes all the data which are published on the MODID website.

No similar procedures have been established for collecting data on employability and career paths of the Department's graduates. At any rate, the Department regularly distributes to its graduates a questionnaire prepared by MODIP which inquires into their employability and satisfaction.

Student satisfaction surveys are regularly conducted and the OMEA (Internal Evaluation Committee) works in close collaboration with the MODIP to analyze and communicate the

information obtained in order to recommend the appropriate improvements to be introduced by the Department. The OMEA consists of members of the teaching staff from different areas of specialization of the Department (Classics, Byzantine and Modern Greek Philology and Linguistics), and it is worth noting that a representative of the students also participates in this Committee.

There is no provision for the implementation of satisfaction questionnaires for the teaching staff.

The AP had the very positive impression that the Department and the MODIP of the University take very seriously the collection and, above all, the analysis of the data to determine future or possible areas for improvement. In this respect, the AP has to emphasize the quantity and richness of material that was delivered before and during the site visit, with a rich presentation of statistical data and graphics on profile of the student's population, student satisfaction, duration of studies, average grade etc.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Improve the system for collecting data on the employability and career paths of graduates.

Implement a procedure for recording data on satisfaction of the teaching staff.

Increase the participation rate of students in the evaluation process. Adding a free-text commentary field to the student satisfaction questionnaires would also be desirable.

Principle 8: Public Information

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

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

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

Study Programme compliance

The Department's website (both in Greek and English) is well-structured, clear and user-friendly. All the relevant information is made public: the teaching staff's CVs and research activity, the Study Programme, the intended learning outcomes and the description of the courses; student traineeship and Erasmus mobility; the Department's facilities and resources.

The information provided by the Department is updated and some infelicities mentioned by the AP during the site visit were corrected immediately. In general, the Department is very eager to provide all the relevant information to the open public.

Furthermore, the Department has made available online its Policy for Quality Assurance, including the External Evaluation Report of 2014. All the data for the annual self-evaluation reports are posted on the MODIP website (http://modip.duth.gr/index.php/duth-reports/2011-08-29-10-36-19/annualreports).

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

Finally, as the AP has been in a position to confirm, the Department is very open to the local society. It is no accident that its academic and cultural activities are published in the local media and on social networks (e.g. facebook).

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

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

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

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

The above comprise the evaluation of:

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

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

Study Programme compliance

As stated above, the Department has an internal quality assurance system for monitoring, reviewing and revisioning its Study Programme. The OMEA, in collaboration with MODIP, is responsible for reviewing the data and presenting them for discussion in the Departmental Council. On the basis of these results, modifications are made to improve the teaching and research activity of the Department.

With regard to the duration of studies, in recent years the number of courses has been decreased, a fact that has led to a reduction in the workload for students and a better rate of completion of studies (more than 60% obtain their degree in four years, with an average grade of 7.8).

As also stated above, in order to provide work experience to students, a practicum (*praktiki askisi*) has been established since the academic year 2014-2015. At this point, it is again worth noting the close relations and cooperation that the Department maintains with local external stakeholders and institutions.

Pedagogical content courses have also been introduced to ensure the pedagogical preparation of the students for their future professional development as secondary school teachers.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Principle 10: Regular External Evaluation of Undergraduate Programmes

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

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

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

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

Study Programme compliance

The Department underwent a first external evaluation organized by HQA in 2014 (the External Evaluation Report is published on the website). However, the AP was informed that the evaluation culture was introduced in the Department many years before.

During the site visit, the AP could attest that the Department's teaching staff is aware of the importance and usefulness of the internal and external evaluations. The teaching staff members have done their best to identify areas for continuous improvement and to implement new developments and practices based on feedback from the evaluation and accreditation processes.

As a result, changes have been implemented in response to recommendations made by the External Evaluation Committee in 2014. Among others the following must be noted: a. The number of courses has promptly been reduced from 44 to 40 (recomm. 6); b. Specialization in Linguistics has been introduced in compliance with what is followed in other Philology Departments in the country, so that students can choose between three fields of specialization (recomm. 9); and c. The Department has created a Counselling Committee in which members of the teaching staff responsible for each academic year are in charge of mentoring students (recomm. 7).

The acceptance of other recommendations (e.g. the library's supplies) was not exclusively contingent on the Department's decisions.

The problem of insecurity on campus, especially with wild dogs, has also not been properly addressed. Transportation still needs to be strengthened, as the campus is far from the city and isolated.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The Department should continue its efforts to implement the External Evaluation Committee recommendations, especially regarding to the departmental library and the infrastructures of the campus.

Part C: Conclusions

I.   Features of Good Practice

1. Commitment to follow the principles of the HQA policy and improve the quality and services of the Study Programme.
2. Significant efforts to establish a student-centred learning environment and provide a flexible curriculum.
3. Understanding of the weaknesses of students enrolled and determination to overcome difficulties arising thereof.
4. Close association with local society and stakeholders and interest in establishing a network with alumni.
5. Commendable activities within the European academic environment (organization of conferences, seminars, summer schools, etc.).
6. Excellent cooperation between the Department and MODIP.
7. Promotion and expansion of bilateral Erasmus agreements.
8. Ability to attract significant donations.
9. Harmonious relationship among administration, faculty, and students.

II.   Areas of Weakness

1. Unsatisfactory proportion between students and teachers which has a negative impact on the learning procedures and outcomes.
2. Problematic infrastructure unfitting to a good management of teaching.
3. Library underdeveloped and poor in resources.
4. Lack of comprehensive research policy and limited number of research projects in certain areas.

III.   Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

1. Establish a more reasonable ratio between teachers and students.
2. Need to introduce seminars and BA theses (with provision for more ECTS).
3. Integration of courses on History and Philosophy into the core curriculum.
4. Introduction of modern language and Digital Humanities courses into the Study Programme.
5. Enhance the research output of the teaching staff.
6. Variously support staff's professional development.
7. Engage more and more students with the Department's activities.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: 1, 3, 4, 7, 8 and 9.

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: 2, 5, 6 and 10.

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are: none

The Principles where failure of compliance was identified are: none

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

The members of the Accreditation Panel for the Undergraduate Programme Greek Philology of the Democritus University of Thrace

Name and Surname   Signature

- **Prof. Stephanos Efthymiadis (Chair)**, Open University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus

- **Assoc. Prof. Alicia Morales Ortiz**, University of Murcia, Murcia, Spain

- **Assoc. Prof. Spyridon Tzounakas**, University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus