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ΑΡΧΗ ΔΙΑΣΦΑΛΙΣΗΣ ΚΑΙ ΠΙΣΤΟΠΟΙΗΣΗΣ  
ΤΗΣ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΑΣ ΣΤΗΝ ΑΝΩΤΑΤΗ ΕΚΠΑΙΔΕΥΣΗ

HELLENIC REPUBLIC

H Q A

HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE  
AND ACCREDITATION AGENCY

# Accreditation Report for the Undergraduate Study Programme of:

**Physical Education and Sports Science**

**Institution: Aristotle University of Thessaloniki**

**Date: 20<sup>th</sup> October 2019**

ΑΡΙΣΤΕΙΔΟΥ 1 & ΕΥΡΙΠΙΔΟΥ, 105 59 ΑΘΗΝΑ

Τηλ.: +30 210 9220944, FAX: +30 210 9220143

Ηλ. Ταχ.: [adipsecretariat@hqa.gr](mailto:adipsecretariat@hqa.gr) Ιστότοπος: <http://www.hqa.gr>

1, ARISTIDOU ST., 105 59 ATHENS, GREECE

Tel.: +30 210 9220944, Fax: +30 210 9220143

Email: [adipsecretariat@hqa.gr](mailto:adipsecretariat@hqa.gr) Website: [www.hqa.gr](http://www.hqa.gr)



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



Report of the Panel appointed by the HQA to undertake the review of the Undergraduate Study Programme of the **Physical Education and Sports Science** of the **Aristotle University of Thessaloniki** 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 **Physical Education and Sports Science** of the **Aristotle University of Thessaloniki** comprised the following three (3) members, drawn from the HQA Register, in accordance with the Law 4009/2011:

1. **Prof Konstantinos Tsintzas** (Chair)  
University of Nottingham, UK
2. **Dr Maria Kavussanu**  
University of Birmingham, UK
3. **Dr Ioanna Mastora**  
Panhellenic Union of Physical Education Graduates, Greece

## **II. Review Procedure and Documentation**

The Accreditation Panel (AP) received the relevant electronic documentation from the Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency (HQA) in advance of the visit. The AP met on Tuesday 15 October 2019 in Athens and was briefed by a team from HQA on the mission, standards and guidelines of the accreditation process. On the same day, the Panel members flew to Thessaloniki to undertake the site visit of the Department of Physical Education and Sports Science (TEFAA) of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. The following day, the AP met with the Dean of the Faculty of Physical Education and Sports Science, the Head of TEFAA and the Rector of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki to discuss the purpose of the visit. The AP visited the teaching and research facilities of the TEFAA on the Thessaloniki campus and the Sports Centre on the main University campus between the 16th and 17th October 2019. The visit also involved presentations of various aspects of the academic programme and quality assurance processes that were punctuated with discussions with members of the Department and University Quality Assurance teams (OMEA and MODIP) and other academic members of staff. Meetings with current and past students and local partners, stakeholders and employers also took place. Due to time constraints, it was not possible to review assessment-related teaching materials or information available on the e-learning platform. The visit was well-organized and the AP would like to extend their gratitude to all members of staff and students, as well as external partners, for their excellent hospitality and cooperation with the accreditation process.

### **III. Study Programme Profile**

TEFAA is the Department of Physical Education and Sport Science and was created in 1982. Its predecessors were four academies or Colleges dedicated to the training of PE teachers, with the first one founded in 1893. Its vision is to be an excellent Department of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki with international reputation and a dominant role in education, research, sport administration (business) and the promotion of physical activity and sport as contributors to the quality of life. Its remits are: (a) to promote physical education, sport and exercise via scientific research and applied teaching; (b) to ensure graduates are well equipped for professional careers; and (c) the contribution of its graduates to the promotion of sport for improving quality of life of society via physical education and exercise.

The duration of studies is 4 years and the qualification awarded is a degree in Physical Education and Sport Science. TEFAA trains students to become eligible for teaching Physical Education in schools. As well as this, graduates can be employed in a wide variety of sport-related settings, e.g. gyms, sport academies, summer camps and local authorities.

Sports facilities on its Themi campus include football grounds, tennis courts, a basketball court, and the Legacy building "Fokea Clio", weightlifting halls, a climbing hall, a park for outdoor activities, archery and athletics. Several other sport facilities of Thessaloniki are also used, such as the Kaftanzoglio Stadium, Alexandreio Sport Palace (Palais de Sports), the National Gymnasium of Mikra area, Posidonio swimming pool and water sports facilities. The ski resorts of Macedonia are used for the teaching of winter sports.

There are 6 Laboratories to support practical classes: Sports Medicine Laboratory; Human Research and Sports Psychology Laboratory; Laboratory for the Assessment of Human Biological Performance; Biokinetic Laboratory; Behaviour and Physical Activity Laboratory; Laboratory of Sports Management, Tourism and Recreation. Teaching facilities on the Themi campus also include an auditorium, conference rooms and small seminar rooms. Auditoriums on the City Centre campus of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki are also used for the teaching of theoretical courses and examinations.

## 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

The Quality Assurance Policy (QAP) of the Department is appropriate and there is commitment to continuous improvement, which is promoted via Student Evaluations of Teaching (SET) and implemented by an annual evaluation and re-adjustment of the programme, through the Department and University quality assurance teams (OMEA and MODIP, respectively). The last readjustment of the programme took place in 2015. The QAP is sufficiently communicated to all parties via OMEA and MODIP, which maintain close relationships with the academic curriculum

committee. The goals are paired with suitable KPIs such as student evaluations and staff self-assessment processes.

Every semester all members of staff are reminded via email and announcements to complete individual module aims and objectives, encourage SET and evaluate infrastructure and needs for each module. Additionally, at the end of each semester, OMEA checks and evaluates compliance with these requirements in accordance with the goals and procedures required to satisfy SET. The outcomes are disseminated via the curriculum committee so that members of staff can suggest changes to be considered and approved by the Department Academic Staff Committee.

### Panel judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

1) In addition to SET and staff self-assessment, it would be useful to introduce a process of peer review of teaching staff, as means of professional and personal development, with the aim to provide positive feedback through informal meetings between members of staff focusing on the positive aspects of the teaching practice, and discussion of ways to improve or implement alternative teaching methods. This process should be part of the professional development of staff and could be performed by members of staff of the same grade and similar or related discipline. In particular, members of non-tenured teaching staff (EEP) can be the immediate beneficiaries of this process.

2) The percent of student surveys has increased from 2 to 18% so there has been substantial improvement, which is very encouraging. However, this needs further improvement to ensure that measurable and valid conclusions can be drawn from larger student sample sizes. Modern methodologies to increase the number of student surveys could be implemented, and we understand that the University is planning to introduce phone apps for in-class evaluation of teaching staff by students who attend the lectures.

## 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

The study programme has been redesigned on the basis of the external evaluation in 2013. The two Departments (Thessaloniki and Serres) are separate and form part of the same School under the same Dean. They have undergone separate external evaluation processes and it is expected that the changes already completed in TEFAA Thessaloniki will further differentiate the two curricula. In the B9 documents provided (2015-2018) it is stated that students and other stakeholders have not taken part in the design of the programme. We understand that there are some constraints imposed by legislation regarding the professional qualifications required with regard to the ability of the graduates to become PE teachers in primary and secondary schools or coaches.

There is provision for work experience placements for a large number of students. Some progress has been made in linking teaching with research in the current curriculum, e.g., an increased number of students do research projects and dissertations in their final year. Also, a number of taught modules have introduced laboratory reports that form an optional part of module assessment. However, further progress can be made by introducing a compulsory final year research project and written dissertation for all students. This will be strengthened by introducing Research Methods and Statistics as a compulsory module in the curriculum.

There is access to the University Sports Centre every day between 9:00 am – 2:00 pm which allows TEFAA students to undertake the practical aspects of their modules. The Centre and other facilities in the City Centre are also used for community programmes coordinated by the Department.

### Panel judgement

<b>Principle 2: Design and Approval of Programmes</b>	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	√
Non-compliant	

### Panel Recommendations

The current curriculum would benefit from some modifications as described below.

- 1) The timetable for some modules should be altered to allow for better progression to other modules or experiences. For example, in the current curriculum, Physiology and Exercise Physiology are taught in the same semester. The AP feels that Physiology should be taught in the semester preceding the teaching of Exercise Physiology and should be a prerequisite for students to attend Exercise Physiology. In addition, Pedagogy, which is currently taught in the 6<sup>th</sup> semester (Year 3) should be moved to Year 1 and be a prerequisite for all sports and teaching-related modules. Furthermore, Educational Psychology is taught in the 8<sup>th</sup> semester (end of Year 4), the same year that the students undertake their PE experience. It seems logical that Educational Psychology should be completed prior to the students undertaking their PE placement in schools, and possibly be a prerequisite for students undertaking this placement. The latter should be moved from Year 4 to Year 3, to also allow more time in Year 4 for work on dissertation, specialization or other work experience placements that have been introduced.
- 2) The Panel suggests that a module on Developmental Pedagogy is introduced to enable graduates to better operate as PE teachers in schools, particularly in primary schools.
- 3) A number of modules, which are typically compulsory in modern sport science programmes but optional in this programme, should become compulsory. One such module is the Research Methods and Statistics (EPO159K), and this should ideally be taught in the early years of the curriculum. In addition, Ergometria (EPO146K), Biokinetics (058K), Biochemistry of Exercise (061K) and Exercise Physiology (064K) should also be compulsory for all students. We understand that the current number of students and facilities make the introduction of practical classes associated with these modules very challenging. However, when the number of the students can be determined by the Department itself this may become a realistic goal.
- 4) The Department has reduced the number of modules. However, there are still 150 modules offered in total, and students are required to complete 51 modules for their degree. Further reduction is required, particularly in the number of the compulsory sport courses that are not part of the primary and secondary school curriculum and, therefore, not required for graduates

to teach PE. This is essential because it will reduce the compulsory contact time for practical instruction, which currently overloads the curriculum. We realize that this may be difficult to achieve in the short-term, but it should be an important part of the medium-and long-term strategy of the Department in its ambition to meet the needs of the modern society in line with its vision and that of the wider University.

The compulsory part of the programme (15 theoretical and 24 practical modules) is not in line with the academic remit of the Department or contemporary sport science programmes. There is more emphasis on practical than theoretical modules. Moreover, the assessment of practical modules is somewhat outdated, with a large proportion (20-50%) of assessment devoted to the execution of practical skills. The ability of the graduates to teach PE in schools should depend on their understanding of the subject-specific didactic learning methods involved and the scientific approach to implement them rather than their ability to execute practical skills.

In our meeting with current students, they expressed concerns about the large number of hours spent on attending practical modules. The students felt that a short-term and realistic measure to address this concern would be to acquire basic knowledge of core practical courses (e.g. basketball, volleyball, swimming, etc) in a single semester rather than the two compulsory semesters that exist in the current curriculum. This can be followed with the introduction of additional elective courses in a subsequent semester for further specialization if desired by some students.

5) The foreign language courses have become elective in the curriculum, but Research Methods and Statistics remains an elective module. It is the opinion of the AP that this module should become compulsory as it provides essential knowledge for a science degree graduate.

6) The development of a new course in Sports and Professional Ethics in the final year of the studies is important and needs to be implemented as a mandatory course as recommended by the last external evaluation in 2013.

### 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

In general, the Department has made efforts to adopt a student-centred learning approach, which encourages students to develop various skills. The curriculum consists of many modules with different modes of delivery. There are lectures, practicals, small group teaching in practical courses, and optional laboratory sessions that are linked to some theoretical modules. The students benefit from the introduction of the e-learning platform where teaching resources become available (in some cases before the relevant lectures take place). The assessment of the modules has been enriched with part of the marks being allocated to essay/laboratory reports for a number of modules (for those students who choose to attend the lab classes).

Unfortunately, due to time constraints, it was not possible for the AP to review assessment methods and examples of coursework or exam material to determine some of the above criteria. Student evaluations and staff self-assessment procedures are also in place. However, it is not clear how the assessment regulations take into account mitigating circumstances.

The introduction of senior course tutors for each year is also a positive step. However, the communication between students and course tutors is currently performed in an *ad hoc* basis and could be improved by introducing a formal process, by which students communicate their feedback to the tutors, for example by introducing regular scheduled tutorial sessions. In the discussions of the AP with students, it became very apparent that the Department promotes an atmosphere of mutual respect between students and academic staff. It also became apparent that students who express an interest in learning have multiple opportunities to enhance their knowledge and skills.

The AP has been informed that the additional criteria stated above are met, and the relevant information (e.g., assessment criteria, etc) is published in the e-learning platform. However, as the AP did not have access to the e-learning platform it was not possible to verify the above.

### Panel judgement

<b>Principle 3: Student- centred Learning, Teaching an Assessment</b>	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	√
Non-compliant	

### Panel Recommendations

Based on feedback from current students the following points were raised:

- 1) Create opportunities for students to allow specialization in scientific fields such as exercise physiology, biochemistry, nutrition, biomechanics, prevention/rehabilitation. To facilitate this, the Department should consider the introduction of a second specialty option in year 3 in addition to the primary option in year 4.
- 2) Where possible, the teaching of theoretical modules should take place in the morning, and not late afternoon, so that overall attendance can be improved.
- 3) First aid should be introduced as a compulsory course early in the curriculum.
- 4) Consider introducing regular scheduled tutorial sessions.

## 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

Orientation of Year 1 students takes place in the first week of the academic year. Procedures for student progress are in place and both OMEA and MODIP play an important role in this. The students are provided with a transcript and a diploma supplement describing their study content upon graduation. Practical training/work placements are in place and there is an extensive network developed with external stakeholders and partners throughout the local region. Access to ATLAS service forms an important part of this process.

### Panel judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

The orientation of students in Year 1 can be further strengthened by introducing the concept of personal tutor for each student in conjunction with regular timetabled sessions. This will complement the role of the senior course tutors and alleviate their workload.

## 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

The recruitment of 19 EEP (non-tenured) members of staff over the last few years is a positive step in addressing the teaching workload within the Department, as only one member of tenured teaching staff (DEP) has been recruited since the last external evaluation in 2013. All members of staff are encouraged to attend conferences and symposia and the Department organizes a number of national and international conferences in a range of disciplines. Some members of staff also take opportunities of the Erasmus staff exchange programme. However, it would be beneficial to increase the number of staff visiting other countries and engage in research collaborations.

Teaching staff complete a self-assessment and reflect on their teaching experiences. A teacher of the year award (based on student surveys) has been established to encourage teaching excellence and best practice.

Although the Department has attracted a large number of funded research projects, it appears that these are concentrated in certain research areas. Moreover, a large number of members of DEP, whose remit is to engage in both research and teaching, do not appear to be research active.

We observed an excellent and inclusive research environment within the Department which has been facilitated by strong leadership and the merging of smaller laboratories to larger units and the close collaboration between the directors of those laboratories. Young postgraduate researchers have access to these facilities and benefit from regular supervision and mentoring. Young researchers commented to the members of the AP on the excellent relationship they maintain with academic staff and the quality of their educational experience. Young researchers have the opportunity to attend and present their research at national and international conferences and seminars, including those organized by the Department.

## Panel judgement

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

## Panel Recommendations

1) More members of staff need to be active researchers and develop national and international networks of collaborators. The Department has a goal to increase its research active staff from 50 to 60% by the end of 2020. It is not clear whether research active entails publishing in scopus journals (this is not realistic within that timeframe) or simply initiate engagement with research processes, such as applications for funding programmes. In the first instance, the latter could be facilitated by improving research collaborations between research active and inactive members of staff.

2) Only short-term goals have been set, that is until December 2020. It is important that medium- (2-year interim evaluations) and long-term goals (until the next external accreditation in 4 years) are set and periodically evaluated. For these goals to be achieved it is important that a larger number of staff apply for research funding, engage in research collaborations, and take advantage of programmes such as Erasmus. In addition, implementing the suggestion of the previous external evaluation committee of asking all members of DEP to produce an annual report of their teaching, research, and administration activities would be beneficial.

3) The implementation of peer review by staff of the same grade and possibly similar disciplines would be a further improvement to the current system of staff development and evaluation.

4) A departmental Research Committee has been established as suggested by the previous external evaluation in 2013. It would be vital that the remit of the Committee includes the design and implementation of a strategic plan to increase the number of research active staff and enhance the overall quality and number of research outputs. This will be in line with the vision of the Department and the wider University which focuses on promoting excellence in teaching, learning and research.

## 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

The sport facilities available to the Department on the Themi and main University campuses are impressive. Local national facilities are also used (e.g. Kaftanzoglio Stadium, swimming pool, etc). Research facilities are also well equipped and accessible to students. However, the Department should consider including in its strategic plan the creation of dedicated teaching laboratories for the delivery of the laboratory practicals, which currently take place in research laboratories of certain members of staff.

The central budget is inadequate for the proper operation of the Department. However, innovative ways have been developed to attract funding (e.g., facilities are hired, and expertise is provided for a variety of activities involving children from local schools and clubs). Professional athletes and clubs also use the facilities for rehabilitation and fitness evaluation. The Department has access to University sport facilities on the main campus between 9am - 2pm every day. These are used for teaching purposes but also to host educational programmes and summer camps involving children from local schools and sport academies. The income from these activities is used to maintain existing facilities and purchase equipment for teaching needs.

It is also impressive that the research active members of staff (who are 2.5% of the entire University staff) attract income from research grants that contribute 4.6% percent towards the University research income.

It should be noted that a major issue is the fact that students in years 3 and 4, and occasionally in year 2, have to attend teaching sessions in two campuses which are approximately one hour apart from each other when using public transport. In addition, the Department has a small library on the Thermi campus, which is only open for 4 hours per day. Due to time constraints, the AP did not have the opportunity to visit the library on the Thermi campus or discuss student support with the support and administrative staff.

### Panel judgement

<b>Principle 6: Learning Resources and Student Support</b>	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	√
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### Panel Recommendations

- 1) The Department should try to extend the opening hours of the TEFAA library and the secretariat office on the Thermi campus and explore the possibility of introducing a public transport network (either through the City Council or the University) that facilitates a direct link between the main University campus and the one on Thermi.
- 2) The Department should consider including in its strategic plan the creation of dedicated teaching laboratories for the delivery of the laboratory practicals. Currently, these take place in research laboratories of certain members of staff, which is a big challenge given the small size of these laboratories and the very large number of students. We realize that this has space and financial implications. Therefore, a long-term strategic goal of the Department, could be the creation of such teaching laboratories. This could potentially be funded by charities and donations (e.g., Niarchos Foundation). These facilities can also double up as testing facilities for external stake holders, so that income can be generated to maintain them and repay their cost.
- 3) Some provision should also be made to establish an IT suite for teaching purposes on the Thermi campus.

## 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

There is a very good system of information management in place that consists of e-Study guide and e-learning platforms, course and student evaluation inventories (including academic statistics and student grades), the Cardisoft software, Big Blue Button (On-line tutoring), social media, and the Department and University websites (used for dissemination of information and announcements). Alumni and employer surveys are also disseminated through the relevant resources. However, no data are available on what graduates do after completing their degree.

### Panel judgement

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

### **Panel Recommendations**

- 1) The Department should consider collecting data on the career destination of its graduates.
- 2) Student evaluations have been fully implemented, and there is a plan to improve this further with phone apps. The current response rate in student evaluations is ~18%, which is a substantial increase over the 2% original response rate. Teaching staff emphasize the importance of student feedback and students are encouraged to complete the student surveys. This could be further improved by taking significant steps to increase lecture attendance.
- 3) A monitoring and evaluation process for all Department members of staff has been implemented. The data for each taught module is collected by the internal Quality Assurance Team and evaluated by the Curriculum Team that, with approval of the Department's staff committee, makes relevant suggestions for improvement of individual modules. The next step in the full implementation of the monitoring and evaluation process is to collect the information and metrics for all activities for each member of staff to generate annual activity reports summarizing their teaching, research and service outcomes as also recommended by the last external evaluation in 2013.

## 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 AP was informed that the Department has adopted an efficient approach to dissemination of public information, such as announcements of activities to students the public and other stakeholders. Press releases are being circulated to TV and radio stations and relevant websites. Information available to students on intended learning outcomes, teaching, learning and assessment procedures used could not be verified due to time constraints and lack of access to the e-learning platform. Furthermore, time constraints did not allow exploration of graduate employment information.

### Panel judgement

Principle 8: Public Information	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	√
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### Panel Recommendations

- 1) The awareness of local employers and stakeholders with regard to student work placements and associated regulations can be improved. For example, not all employers/stakeholders were aware of the ATLAS programme and the opportunity to have students to do their practical work experience in their companies/clubs/local councils. We recommend that the Department works closely with the relevant University authority and is more active in communicating information about the ATLAS programme to external stakeholders and the requirements for signing up to this programme.
- 2) External evaluation panels should have access to e-learning during site visits.

## 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

There is a robust procedure of internal evaluation and monitoring in place. Two months before the end of each semester an announcement is placed on the Department website and discussed at the Department Staff Committee, so that teaching staff can prepare student surveys. The internal ongoing evaluation is monitored by OMEA. Every member of staff is required to perform evaluation of each module taking into account student expectations and needs. The data generated are gathered by OMEA, analysed and metric generated, and changes implemented accordingly. For example, the effectiveness of student assessment has been improved by introducing a variety of assessment methods in addition to written examinations. The continuous satisfaction of students, as evidenced through SET, is evidence of the effectiveness of on-going monitoring. However, this comprises only 18% of the student population.

Some aspects of student progression may need further evaluation, e.g., a large number of students do not take part in the examinations and take a long time to complete their degree. This may be due to the students' workload, and the requirement to attend a large number of practical classes, which are delivered in different sites. Moreover, the assessment of practical modules is somewhat outdated, with a large proportion (20-50%) of assessment devoted to the execution of practical skills. However, the ability of the graduates to teach PE should not depend on their ability to execute practical skills.

## Panel judgement

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

## Panel Recommendations

- 1) In addition to on-going monitoring of teaching methods and their effectiveness, the Department should consider setting up a procedure for the regular evaluation of sport facilities and equipment in accordance to teaching needs.
- 2) Procedures need to be put in place to enable more students to progress more efficiently through the programme.
- 3) Assessment in sport courses should be based on the ability of the students to teach rather than execute practical skills.

## 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 administrating 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 evaluation of the Department's academic programme by the External Evaluation Committee (EEC) in 2013, generated a number of recommendations with regard to improvements in the curriculum, student experience and teaching methods. The AP assessed the compliance of the Department to those recommendations and examined its overall engagement and awareness regarding external evaluations processes in general.

Laboratory practical sessions and work placements have increased since the last evaluation. According to the Departmental report, 8 theoretical core modules are now offering practical laboratory hours. The ECTS have increased accordingly. The AP has noticed improvement, however, most of these courses are elective in nature and we feel that all students attending the programme should benefit from exposure to practical hands-on experiences in the main branches of modern Sport Science (Exercise Physiology & Biochemistry, Biomechanics, Psychology and Sports Medicine), which should be mandatory. The Department could consider including in its strategic plan the creation of dedicated teaching laboratories for the delivery of the laboratory practicals, which currently take place in research laboratories of certain members of staff. We realize that this has space and financial implications. A long-term strategic goal of the Department could be the creation of such teaching laboratories. These facilities can also double up as testing facilities for external stakeholders so that income can be generated to maintain these facilities and repay their cost.

The AP has noticed that steps have been taken toward establishing a more student friendly timetable that will facilitate lecture attendance and will optimize the use of available resources. All courses of Year 1 and most of Year 2 take place on the Themi campus. However, a large number of practical courses take place elsewhere in facilities scattered in the City Centre. The

departmental plan is to build additional sport facilities on the existing Themi campus to accommodate at least 75-80% of the academic curriculum in a single site. This will benefit student attendance as it remains very low, due to the inflexible timetable and the split of teaching between various sites across the City.

Although the number of practical modules has decreased from 59 to 51, a large number of sport modules are still being taught as compulsory, which constraints the expansion of the theoretical modules (along with their laboratory sessions) as compulsory modules and the introduction of final year dissertations for all students. One possible solution that was discussed with students and members of staff was the grouping of sport modules depending on their commonalities.

The students also noted that most theoretical sessions take place in the afternoon and suggested that, where possible, their teaching should take place in the morning, so that overall attendance can be improved. For example, none of the elective lectures for Year 1, where a lecture theatre and practical facilities are available in the same site, is delivered in the morning (before 12:30). In all years, 90% of theoretical modules take place in the afternoon. This is problematic because these modules are not compulsory to attend. The overlap in teaching is also an issue. For example, EPO128K is scheduled at the same time and day as EPO149K (Thursday 15:00 - 16:30). Thus, students cannot enrol in both of these modules. 061K and EPO231K are also scheduled at the same time and day (Wednesday 15:00 - 16:30), whereas EPO254, EPO 252, and 012 are scheduled on Thursdays between 15:00 - 16:30.

The Dissertation remains optional in the revised curriculum. A number of specializations have adopted a dissertation requirement. The AP discussed this with the teaching staff and reinforced the requirement for the introduction of a mandatory research project and written dissertation for all students in the final year of the programme in accordance with international education standards.

The AP did not have access to e-learning platform due to existing University policy that restricts this to members of staff and students. This policy is not conducive to external evaluation panels that should have access to such platforms during site visits. Notwithstanding this, current students informed us that, at least some, academic staff do upload handouts, powerpoint presentations and other learning resources on the e-learning platform. The use of the e-learning platform should be mandatory for all members of staff within the Department.

### Panel judgement

<b>Principle 10: Regular External Evaluation of Undergraduate Programmes</b>	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	√
Non-compliant	

### Panel Recommendations

Please see our recommendations incorporated in the Study Programme compliance section above and summarized in Part C of the report below (under Follow-up Actions).

## **PART C: CONCLUSIONS**

### **I. Features of Good Practice**

- Excellent collegiate atmosphere has been created within the Department that encourages collaborations and personal development. The reduction in the number of laboratories with the creation of larger units and the enhanced synergy between them has contributed to this environment.
- All UG students have the opportunity to take part in laboratory activities and gain hands-on experience with various skills, if they wish to be involved in research projects or undertake dissertations.
- Students have the opportunity to undertake practical work experience with a wide range of employers and stake holders, including former graduates.
- Implementation of robust student evaluation processes and the important role that OMEA and MODIP play in this.
- There are very strong links between the Department and the wider community. This generates much needed income and offers unique opportunities for students and graduates to practice and find employment. Numerous schools and children benefit from these links. The Department has been very creative in finding ways to link its activities with the wider community needs and should be commended for the initiatives they have undertaken.

### **II. Areas of Weakness**

- There are still too many compulsory practical courses which create issues with timetable, transport of students between sites, and ultimately attendance of theoretical modules, which is very low.
- Assessment of sport modules is based in part on successful skill execution.
- Important elements of a contemporary sport science curriculum (such as Research Methods and Statistics; Research Project and Dissertation) are elective rather than compulsory for all students.
- A large number of members of DEP are not research active.
- A large number of students do not complete their degree within the stipulated number of years and do not attend the theoretical modules.
- There is overlap in the timetable in some modules, in particular the theoretical modules.
- Laboratories classes for fundamental theoretical modules (e.g., Exercise Physiology, Ergometry, Biochemistry, Biomechanics, Sports Medicine and Psychology) are optional and reserved for students that express an interest, rather than compulsory.

### III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- Implementation of departmental strategic plans for both teaching and research with clearly defined short-, medium- and long-term goals.
- Further reduction is required in the number of compulsory sport courses that are not part of the primary and secondary school curriculum and, therefore, not required for graduates to teach PE. In the first instance, key core practical modules should be concentrated in a single semester along with the introduction of additional elective sport courses in a subsequent semester for further specialization if desired.
- Consider implementation of peer-review process for staff of the same academic grade and possibly similar disciplines.
- Practical aspects and laboratory classes associated with fundamental theoretical modules (Exercise Physiology, Ergometry, Biochemistry, Biomechanics, Psychology and Sports Medicine) should be compulsory.
- Introduction of a mandatory research project and written dissertation for all students in the final year of the programme.
- Where possible, teaching of theoretical modules should take place in the morning.
- Use the information and metrics for all academic activities undertaken by each member of staff to generate annual activity reports summarizing their teaching, research and service outcomes.
- The Research Methods and Statistics module should become compulsory.
- The assessment of practical (sport) modules should not be based on skill execution alone. The emphasis of the assessment should be placed on their understanding of the subject-specific didactic learning methods involved and the scientific approach to implement them.
- Ensure there is no overlap between modules that should be compulsory in the timetable and take steps to increase the number of students that complete their degree within the stipulated number of years.
- Develop a mandatory Sports and Professional Ethics course in the final year of the programme.
- Core theory courses (Physiology and Pedagogy) should be taught in the first two semesters and be prerequisites for courses in later years.
- Educational Psychology should be completed prior to the students undertaking their PE placement in schools, which should be moved to Year 3.
- Consider the introduction of a Constructive Developmental Pedagogy module.

#### IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: 4, 7

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: 1, 5, 6, 8, 9

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are: 2, 3 and 10

The Principles where failure of compliance was identified are: None

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



**The members of the Accreditation Panel for the Undergraduate Programme Physical Education and Sport Science of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki**

**Name and Surname**

**Signature**

**Prof Konstantinos Tsintzas**

University of Nottingham, UK

**Dr Maria Kavussanu**

University of Birmingham, UK

**Dr Ioanna Mastora**

Panhellenic Union of Physical Education Graduates, Greece