Accreditation Report
for the Undergraduate Study Programme of:

Veterinary Medicine
Institution: Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
Date: 27 November 2021

Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the Undergraduate Study Programme of **Veterinary Medicine** 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 External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the Undergraduate Study Programme of **Veterinary Medicine** of the **Aristotle University of Thessaloniki** comprised the following four (4) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

1. **Professor Michael Polymenis (Chair)**

    Texas A & M University, United States of America

2. **Professor Beniamino Cenci Goga**

    University of Perugia, Italy

3. **Professor Andronikos (Andy) Mauromoustakos**

    University of Arkansas, United States of America

4. **Dr Vasilios Delistamatis**

    Member of the Geotechnical Chamber of Greece, Greece

II.   Review Procedure and Documentation

Since the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel (EEAP) in this case is composed of four members, instead of the expected five members, EEAP sought and received assurance from HAHE that the Report will have the proper legal standing and basis. On behalf of HAHE, Ms. V. Kyriakousi assured EEAP in writing that "although ideally, the External Evaluation and Accreditation Panel (EEAP) consists of five members, according to the standing regulations, it is absolutely acceptable for the EEAP to consist of three or four members. The Report that will be produced will be valid and entirely legitimate."

Due to the current Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic, measures were taken to limit its spread. The Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (HAHE) decided to implement the accreditation review process of the Veterinary Medicine Undergraduate Programme (VMUP) of the Department of Veterinary Medicine (VM) of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTh) via teleconferences. All briefings and meetings were conducted efficiently and within the allocated time frame through Zoom. Replacing the on-site visits with virtual meetings was a challenge for all participating parties. The video conferences proceeded without any technical problems. However, the lack of face-to-face contact and physical presence of the Panel members at the Department's premises did not allow for an in-depth evaluation of the departmental infrastructure.

On Thursday, 21 October 2021, a two-hour orientation meeting was held with HAHE's Director-General, Dr Christina Besta, via Zoom. Some of the members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel (EEAP) joined the meeting. Dr Besta presented the Quality Assurance standards for Quality Accreditation of Undergraduate programmes and Accreditation Guidelines, and members received helpful information. The EEAP received the final timetable for the teleconferences on November 16th, 2021. The Chair of EEAP acted as the host for all debriefing and private meetings among the EEAP members. Before the 'virtual' visit, EEAP received the Proposal for Accreditation of the Department of Veterinary Medicine and other relevant material. The EEAP discussed the strategy and issues to be considered during the visit, and the tasks of each Panel member were allocated. Upon request of the EEAP, additional supporting documentation and presentations were provided promptly by the VM staff after the teleconferences.

The accreditation review was initiated on Monday, 22 November, at 4:00 pm Athens time. The inaugural teleconference was held with Dr Dimitrios Koveos, Professor, Vice-Rector for Academic & Student Affairs / President of QAU and the President of the Department, Dr Paschalis Fortomaris. Dr Koveos provided a brief but comprehensive presentation of the history and academic profile of the University. Dr Fortomaris presented the departmental profile, its policies on quality assurance, and other study programme issues. The key issues focused on the curriculum's suitability and structure, the pursuit of learning outcomes and qualifications, following the European and the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education.

The teleconference meetings continued with six (6) members of the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG/OMEA) and the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU/MODIP). Various issues were discussed, focusing mainly on the Undergraduate programme's

compliance with quality accreditation standards, curriculum revisions, the students' progression, and assignments. The IEG expressed its support and commitment to implementing a comprehensive quality policy to promote its academic mission. The teleconference continued with ten (10) teaching staff members, who thoroughly discussed the undergraduate study programme, the relation between teaching and research activities, the professional development opportunities, the faculty workload, projects and research activities, and the undergraduate students' questionnaire evaluations. Following this meeting, the EEAP met and discussed with a group of ten (10) students of different years of study about their studies, the Departmental/Institutional facilities, and their academic staff contacts. At the end of the first day, the EEAP communicated in private to reflect on the teleconferences.

The teleconferences continued the following day with an online tour of the classrooms, lecture halls, libraries, laboratories, and institutional facilities. The next teleconference meetings involved ten (10) alumni graduates of the Department who expressed their opinions for the study programme, teaching and research, facilities, and the career paths they have followed. Following this, a group of ten (10) social partners, employers, and stakeholders from the private and public sectors joined the Panel. The EEAP discussed their contacts, links to the Department, and their experiences with graduates and Departmental staff. The third day of the review started with a joint teleconference meeting with the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG/OMEA) and the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU/MODIP) representatives. The teleconference continued, with the attendance of Professor Nikolaos Papaioannou, Rector of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki; the Vice-Rector; and the Department Head. During this meeting, the discussions focused on issues that needed further clarification. The Chair of the EEAP concluded the meeting presenting the review's key findings, stressing the strong points of the curriculum and the Department's shortcomings, followed by further discussion and expression of views.

The EEAP acknowledges the spirit of cooperation shown by the Departmental staff and their willingness to collaborate and support the University's Quality Assurance policy at all levels and contribute to upgrading the Department's quality standards. The process of accreditation review via teleconference was deemed sufficient and efficient. All individuals who participated in the e-meetings had the opportunity to voice their views.

From Thursday, 25 November to Saturday, 27 November, the EEAP members worked independently and as a team on their assigned tasks on the Accreditation Report. The teamwork was accomplished via daily teleconferences, as organized by the Chair.

III.   Study Programme Profile

The Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTh) was established in 1925 as an Independent Higher Education Institution with University status. In 1926, AUTh accepted its inaugural class of students. AUTh provides education at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels. It consists of forty-one (41) different departments, organized in the following eleven (11) Faculties or Schools:

- Education
- Theology
- Philosophy
- Physical Sciences
- Law
- Physical Education and Sport Sciences
- Economics and Political Sciences
- Agriculture Forestry and Natural Environment
- Health Sciences
- Engineering
- Fine Arts

The AUTh Department of Veterinary Medicine (VM) was founded in 1950 and the first students were enrolled in the academic year 1950-51 (in accordance with Law 1776/51). Currently, VM is part of the Faculty/School of Health Sciences. The laboratories and administrative offices of the Department are located at the main University Campus of AUTh, about 2 km away (east) from the city centre (Aristotelous Square). The Department's Small/Companion Animal Clinics are 3.5 km away, located west of the city centre. The Department's Farm Animal Clinic is located at Kolchiko - Lagadas (about 27 km north/north east of the city centre).

The Department generates and transmits knowledge in the field of Veterinary Medicine. The Department implements and organizes teaching, training, and research in relevant areas. The mission of the Department is the in-depth training of students to become competent and successful veterinarians, able to apply the principles of Veterinary Medicine, dedicated to protect and improve animal health, improve animal production and the quality of animal products, protect people from zoonotic diseases, protect the environment, advance veterinary research and experimental medicine, and solve emerging problems related to Veterinary Medicine.

The number of incoming students is determined yearly by the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, averaging about 130-150 students/year in the last few years. About 85-95% of the admitted students eventually graduate and obtain their degree. There are currently 1052 enrolled undergraduate students (~25-30% of which are 2 years or more past their expected graduation date), 35 students pursuing their postgraduate MSc diploma in three specialties, and 79 doctoral students.

The Department offers degrees in Veterinary Medicine (a 10-semester/5-year study programme; 3,943 degrees awarded), postgraduate specialization Diplomas (>60 diplomas awarded), and postgraduate Doctoral degrees (342 degrees awarded). There are many distinguished alumni, including the current Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of Pfizer. Currently, VM is composed of seventy-two (72) faculty members (32 Full Professors, 20 Associate Professors, 20 Assistant Professors), one (1) teaching instructor (ΕΔΙΠ), five

(5) laboratory instructors (ΕΤΕΠ), and eight (8) Administrative Staff (including one librarian and one IT support staff).

The Department has the following five (5) Divisions:

- Animal Structure and Function (including the following laboratories):
  - Anatomy, Histology and Embryology of Domestic Animals
  - Animal Physiology
  - Pharmacology
  - Biochemistry and Toxicology
  - Chemistry

- Animal Production, Ichthyology, Ecology and Protection of the Environment (including the following laboratories):
  - Animal Nutrition
  - Animal Husbandry
  - Ichthyology
  - Ecology and Protection of the Environment
  - Animal Production Economy

- Infectious and Parasitic Diseases, Avian Medicine and Pathology
  - Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (ISO 9001 certified)
  - Parasitology and Parasitic Diseases
  - Pathology

- Food Hygiene and Technology (including the following laboratories):
  - Animal Food Products Hygiene – Veterinary Public Health
  - Food Technology of Animal Origin
  - Safety and Quality of Milk and Dairy Products

- Clinical Sciences (ISO9001 certified, including the following clinics and laboratories):
  - Companion Animal Clinic (organized in the following units):
    - Pathology
    - Obstetrics and Surgery
    - Anaesthesiology and Intensive Care
    - Exotic Animals
    - Equine
  - Farm Animal Clinic (organized in the following units):
    - Ruminants
    - Monogastrics
    - Avian
    - Apiary
    - Other commercial animals
    - Mobile clinic
    - Reproductive technologies
  - Diagnostics Laboratory
  - Imaging
  - Pharmacy

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 VM department has established an appropriate Quality Assurance Unit (QAU/MODIP) clearly defining review processes, the programme's continuous improvement, and Key Performance Indicators.

EEAP was provided with an abundance of well-monitored performance metrics, reflecting attention to detail and continuous improvement efforts.

QAU (MODIP) complies, monitors, and enforces the Quality Assurance Policy applied and guaranteed by a committee consisting of three (3) VM members (OMEA). VM has set

specific, measurable, and timely goals for its undergraduate study programme (e.g., improving the 'time to degree' and coursework outcomes). The OMEA is in line with QAU (MODIP) for the improvement of the study programme.

The VM Department was also in full compliance with the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE) standards in past evaluations, the last of which was completed earlier in 2021.

The EEAP observed the commitment to implementing the quality policy required to promote the VMUP. The quality policy statement aims to realize the programme's strategic goals and determine the means and ways of attaining them.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Although information is shared with involved parties, it is strongly recommended that relevant performance metrics are also posted on the VM departmental website.

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 students expressed intense satisfaction with the programme. They were enthusiastic and acknowledged that the faculty had an open-door attitude to hear students' concerns or suggestions.

The programme's mission is to train scientists who will have a career in the veterinary profession. Through research activity and academic teaching, the programme aims to promote science, promote the veterinary profession, and create the next generation of veterinary professionals.

The clinical experience provided is robust and widely acknowledged as such by the students.

The three rotations for 'practical' work experience are a strong component.

Alumni stressed that the training they received during their studies prepared them adequately for their future careers.

The programme allows for student exchange with other institutions in Europe through the ERASMUS and IVSA programmes. Such avenues are used widely by students.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- It was unclear if students are formally involved in OMEA. The students expressed strongly that their opinions and suggestions are heard by the faculty. Nonetheless, they need to realize that their formal involvement is a necessary component of quality assurance processes.

- There are cultural barriers among the students, leading to poor participation in course/professor evaluations. Participation could be incentivized to increase the number of student responses.

- External stakeholders advocated for the creation of more specialized MSc programmes in Food Production and Food Safety, since this is a major industry in Greece. Specifically, more connections between large animal clinical practitioners and Animal Food Safety professionals should be established.

- If possible, establish a regular seminar series, in-person or online, given by external stakeholders to better connect the students with the current market landscape.

- An urgent request by external stakeholders was the implementation of a mechanism for practising veterinarians to receive Credit for Continuing Education.

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

VM's curriculum largely reflects a student-centred learning/teaching process. It respects their individual needs and provides some availability of electives and a variety of pedagogical means.

The current curriculum addresses many of the suggestions of the external evaluation review of 2010 and the last ECOVE's review report of 2014. Overall degree programme reduction, but adding new courses adapted to cover veterinary legislation, animal ethology and welfare, and veterinary certification and professional path.

Of the 82 courses required for graduation, 75 are mandatory. The remaining seven courses are electives, based on student interest, from a total of 23 elective course offerings.

The material's delivery is a mix of traditional lectures, laboratory exercises, written assignments, and clinics. Clinics are the primary form of training in years 4 and 5. Material for all undergraduate courses is also available electronically on the e-class platform.

Depending on the delivery mode, the students are assessed with analogous settings and methods. For example, for traditional lectures through a typical written test, student performance is evaluated during the clinic rotation. The examination schedule and format are announced in advance.

Students with special needs are provided with necessary accommodations.

A list of seven prerequisites is required for enrolment in the 4th and 5th year, mostly clinical advanced classes.

There is a formal appeals process in place, and there is also an academic advisor assigned to each student to monitor their progress in the programme.

The Counselling and Psychological Support Office provides specialized counselling support for students with physical or learning disabilities.

Student's interviewed provided very high satisfaction with the programme student to faculty ratio without suggestions for changes other than possibly extending the 5- year programme into a sixth year.

Current students and alumni commended on the right balance between basic and labs/clinical courses. However, concerns were expressed about the lack of courses on starting a business and succeeding in the veterinary marketplace.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The completion of the student evaluation questionnaires, preferably by electronic means with daily reminders to those that have not completed the evaluations, should be a prerequisite for participation in examinations.

- Courses with high failure rates and or poor attendance and average performance should be re-evaluated and revamped as needed following internal departmental reviews.

- Especially now in the era of CoVID, offering more courses in a hybrid format that sometimes meet online and others in person might lead to increased class attendance that leads to higher participation on exams that improves student performance and success.

- Provide courses in English to enhance the mobility of international students (e.g., Erasmus+ programme) while promoting outreach and internationalization.

- Especially for graduate students and future researchers, additional courses beyond Biostatistics taught in the first year are needed to develop data analytics skills and competence in using Modern Custom Designs of Experiments and Multivariate and Survival Analysis. Perhaps these courses are taught elsewhere in the University as electives for students planning to pursue further graduate degrees. They will strengthen the students' research competence, leading to refereed publications.

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 academic year begins on the 1st of September and ends on the 31st of August of the following year. The minimum admission requirement is a High School Diploma (Greek Lyceum). Entrants to the programme must satisfy the university's general matriculation requirements, including a nationwide examination. Performance in this examination is a standard criterion for anyone who wishes to enter Greek Universities. This examination is conducted once a year, under the supervision of the Ministry of Education.

The number of undergraduate students admitted each academic year consists of a "standard" intake and a "supplementary" intake of students, reaching around 140 students. The supplementary intake is legislated in the Greek laws regarding admission and enrolment of students to Greek Universities.

Several scholarships awarded by the AUTh are available to international students. International students must have an adequate command of the Greek language to benefit fully from their studies in VM. The common practice is that all non-native speakers attend a Greek language course offered by the School of Modern Greek before commencing their studies.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The EEAP recommends that the VM Department consider promoting online and in-person Continuing Education short courses and workshops for the professional alumni that could lead to relevant certification and contribute to their professional development and skills.

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

Intra-departmental collaborations among basic and clinical research leading to co-authorships and collaborative research proposals strengthen the teaching staff's cohesion.

The teaching staff is dedicated, committed, and enthusiastic about their mission.

During laboratory closures due to the COVID pandemic, the faculty implemented innovative online applications to continue teaching demanding labs (e.g., anatomy).

Faculty development leave mechanism is in place and used.

There are mechanisms for the recognition of excellence in teaching, with relevant awards.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The lack of technical support personnel in the clinics and labs imposes an enormous burden on teaching staff, limiting their time and capacity to focus on research. This is by far the most significant problem hampering the development of the teaching staff. The upper administration needs to recognize this deficiency and provide the funds to solve it.

- The current faculty roster of 72 individuals is significantly lower than in the past (100+ faculty members). Hence, there is an ever-increasing teaching load on the faculty, further eroding the available time for research, which should be mitigated with additional hiring of six new faculty in the current academic year, and additional ones after that.

- Although faculty occasionally perform extra teaching (e.g., dividing students into smaller groups), they are not adequately compensated for their additional efforts.

- Establish a mock reviewing Panel for funding proposals to external agencies. A formal structure where research proposals are first reviewed internally and with enough time before the final submission to incorporate the input could be beneficial in securing external funding. Well-meaning and well-intentioned critiques from colleagues, even if they seem harsh and brutal at the time, are usually beneficial in the long run. This is an easy measure to implement at no-cost but with potentially valuable returns.

- Publication and citations per faculty productivity, although adequate, can be improved in the future. On average, there is only one PhD student per faculty member, a problem compounded by the lack of resources to support PhD students.

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

VM provided a highly professional and comprehensive 15-min virtual tour. EEAP congratulates the individual(s) in charge. The facilities and equipment depicted on the videos from all three locations with core facilities left a powerful positive impression on the EEAP as far as infrastructure for teaching, research, and student support.

VM has state-of-the-art equipment, obtained either through state aid, National research funding programmes, or other funded projects. Every laboratory has well-equipped rooms-offices and research facilities to cover both the academic and technical staff's needs and the research.

Funding is tight, but despite the budgetary restrictions in Greece during the past decade, this programme has managed to meet student needs. Budgets remain remarkably low, as pointed in previous evaluations. The faculty and the minimal staff have gone well above and beyond to provide excellent resources and training opportunities for the veterinary students.

EEAP is acknowledging the digital organization of the Administration office since it did not receive any complaints as far as lack of student support.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Core facilities (clinics and labs) should be staffed with personnel to facilitate the teaching and research activities. There should be multiple persons to support the care of the patients and the students' learning. The same goes for many labs, where the support staff lacks numbers compared to faculty. More support staff will free time from faculty to focus on their teaching and scholarly activities, thus increasing overall productivity.

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 analysing information and planning follow-up activities.

Study Programme Compliance

The assessment of teaching methodology used by faculty and the subjects taught is aided significantly by using questionnaires completed by the students anonymously at the end of each semester course.

Students are also involved in the day-to-day monitoring of the quality of teaching through their representatives in the Faculty's General Assembly. If problems arise concerning the educational infrastructure (e.g., classroom adequacy) or the teaching performance, students are entitled to voice their concerns and demand corrective actions. Students are also encouraged to discuss such issues with the Dean and/or the Head of the Department.

Moreover, student representatives participate in the election and promotion of the teaching staff, where they are expected to express their opinion on the teaching ability of the candidates. The formation of the students' opinion of candidates who already are teaching staff members is based on the courses the students have attended. The evaluation of candidates who do not belong to the teaching staff is based on one lecture given by each candidate before the election. Students and faculty need to attend that lecture, to form and express their opinion on the teaching ability of the candidates.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- As also mentioned in the next Section regarding the VM website, the student body profile, VM research accomplishments and services, and the numerous distinguished VM alumni could be better displayed and highlighted through an improved website.

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

In each course Syllabus, teachers involved in preclinical and clinical subjects define the primary skills that need to be attained and the methods to do so.

In planning the preclinical and clinical activities, the number and variety of animals and material of animal origin needed to achieve the established learning outcomes are also identified. This information is published on the website.

The Degree Plan is available on the VM website, where prospective students can find valuable information.

VM provides a brochure (both online and in print) and videos describing the central aspects of the programme and its mission in delivering clinical skills, management of animal production, and promoting public health.

A detailed course description divided per year with the ECTS equivalent is listed, along with information about required exams and course prerequisites.

The brochure includes potential job opportunities for veterinarians, information about postgraduate studies (e.g., MS degrees, advanced traineeships), and international activities dedicated to undergraduate and graduate students (e.g., ERASMUS programme).

Information regarding the last EAEVE certification and the history of the Department is also available.

All procedures and criteria regarding students' progression are published on the website. The Departmental Student Office provides students with complete and detailed information on this matter.

Assessment criteria/procedures are in the syllabus of each course. Each academic year, syllabi are checked for errors and published on the website.

Assessment strategies, including the number of exam sessions and the time gap between sessions, are provided and published on the website.

VM may activate courses and postgraduate training activities based on availability and offer, as approved by the council. These activities are published on the website and through the veterinary professional associations.

Quality assurance strategies are formalized and published on the website.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- While there is a wealth of information on the VM website, accessing that information is not always 'user-friendly'. One should not have to dig through multiple links until the relevant information is accessed. In addition, the English and Greek versions need to match precisely with each other. EEAP is aware that the Department is in the process of redesigning its website. These efforts need to be intensified since the website is the gateway to the public and the numerous services (teaching, research, clinical, etc.) the Department provides. For example, easier online access and scheduling of clinical appointments for animal owners could improve the revenue stream from such services.

Principle 9: Ongoing 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

All participating groups (students, alumni, stakeholders) felt that the undergraduate programme offers knowledge, skills, and competencies to secure a rewarding veterinary career in Greece, EU, and the UK.

In collaboration with ΟΜΕΑ/ΜΟΔΙΠ, VM has established an annual self-assessment following the Quality Assurance Requirements. The VM's student needs and demands of ECOVE are monitored through course questionnaires and exit interviews.

The EEAP is not aware to what extent exit interviews are implemented and is not familiar with its content. During a discussion with OMEA, it was indicated that the graduates expressed a high degree of satisfaction with the programme during exit interviews.

The average overall reported 74% and 81% for the course evaluation and the instructor, respectively, cannot be very reliable because of the very small (single digit in most cases) percentage of students participating in the evaluation process.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Graduates, especially those serving in crucial government and academic positions in Greece and abroad alongside upper-level students and external stakeholders, should be formally consulted and engaged in future UP revisions that are currently not happening to the degree needed.

- Enhance exit interviews and other ways, perhaps through social media or conferences, to gather actionable data to complement the limited participation in course, faculty, and staff evaluations.

Principle 10: Regular External Evaluation of Undergraduate Programmes

PROGRAMMES SHOULD REGULARLY UNDERGO EVALUATION BY COMMITTEES OF EXTERNAL EXPERTS SET BY HAHE. THE TERM OF VALIDITY OF THE ACCREDITATION IS DETERMINED BY HAHE.

HAHE is responsible for administrating the programme accreditation process which is realised as an external evaluation procedure, and implemented by a committee of independent experts. HAHE 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

VM followed the suggestions of the EEAP in the external evaluation of 2010 regarding changes in the curriculum. Significantly, VM is monitored and accredited by the European Association of Establishments for Veterinary Education (EAEVE). Such a mechanism further ensures the continuous monitoring and assessment of the curriculum and the programme's overall quality.

VM presented the changes implemented in the new curriculum, established in 2013. The new curriculum implements the teaching of all the necessary fields to acquire the basic skills that the veterinarian must have and in accordance with the European legislation. The new curriculum was evident in the reduction of theoretical teaching hours and a significant increase of practice in laboratories and clinics. An example is that in the new curriculum, the 10th semester includes only internships in clinics in pet and productive animals and the hygiene and food safety of products of animal origin.

Curriculum changes received positive feedback from students, as noted in the meeting with their ten representatives from different years of study. The representatives of VM graduates and those of employers and social partners also provided positive feedback. The VM Educational Committee also regularly evaluates the curriculum, taking into account the opinion of students and graduates and relevant scientific bodies.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- External stakeholders recommended additional training in the relevant laws covering veterinary practice in Greece, especially in emerging forensics and criminal law areas arising from animal abuse. Knowledge of the relevant and continuously evolving legislation regarding the treatment of animals and the establishment of veterinary clinics are essential components of veterinary practice.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I.　　Features of Good Practice

- Outstanding overall academic environment.

- Excellent facilities.

- Dedicated teaching staff.

- There is a strong culture of quality assessment and curricular changes based on input from students and external stakeholders.

II.　　Areas of Weakness

- The limited support staff in the labs and clinics impedes the teaching and research mission of the department.

- Although the departmental website contains most of the necessary information, its accessibility to the user is not optimal.

- The connection between students and specific market sectors, especially with the Food Industry, was deemed less than ideal by external stakeholders.

III.　　Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- The upper Administration needs to provide the necessary salary lines for the hiring of technical support staff. The EEAP acknowledges the rigid legal framework in Greece for such hires. Nonetheless, this area of weakness was deemed the most significant, urgently in need of corrective action. If administrative (Institutional or from the Ministry of Education) support for hiring technical staff and equipment maintenance is not forthcoming, then an increase in external funding from multiple sources (research agencies, industry, clinical services) needs to be actively pursued to cover these needs.

- Improve the departmental website, not for cosmetic and self-aggrandizing reasons, but as a vehicle to promote and better exploit the various significant contributions and services the department already provides. Such services, easily accessible through the website, will likely improve the financial revenue of the department.

- Implement a formalized Continuing Education programme for licensed veterinarians, awarding relevant certificates.

- Expand invitations to outside speakers from various relevant industries to give seminars to students. Even if those are done informally and not through a course for credit, such seminars will further students' exposure to the real-world career landscape and opportunities.

- Efforts to hire new faculty, already underway, need to be intensified so that the teaching load per faculty is alleviated and research output and funding improve.

IV.   Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: **1, 2, 3, 4**, **6, 7, 8, 9 and 10**.

The Principle where substantial compliance has been achieved is: **5**.

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 External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname   **Signature**

1. **Professor Michael Polymenis (Chair)**
   Texas A & M University, United States of America

2. **Professor Beniamino Cenci Goga**
   University of Perugia, Italy

3. **Professor Andronikos (Andy) Mauromoustakos**
   University of Arkansas, United States of America

4. **Dr Vasilios Delistamatis**
   Member of the Geotechnical Chamber of Greece, Greece