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HELLENIC REPUBLIC

H Q A

HELLENIC QUALITY ASSURANCE
AND ACCREDITATION AGENCY

Accreditation Report
for the Internal Quality Assurance System
(IQAS)

Institution Name: Agricultural University of Athens
Date: 22/09/2019

Report of the Panel appointed by the HQA to undertake the review of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) of the **Agricultural University of Athens** 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 Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) of the Higher Education Institution named: **Agricultural University of Athens (Agr. U. A.)** comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HQA Register, in accordance with the Law 4009/2011:

1. Prof. Anthimos Georgiadis (Chair)
   Leuphana University Lüneburg, Lüneburg, Germany

2. Prof. Athanasios Alexandrou
   California State University - Fresno, Fresno, California, USA

3. Prof. Andreas Efstathiades
   European University Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus

4. Prof. Emeritus Nicholas Kyriakopoulos
   The George Washington University, Washington, USA

5. Prof. Emeritus Ioannis Vlahos
   Hellenic Mediterranean University, Heraklion, Greece

II.   Review Procedure and Documentation

The Panel reviewed the material provided by ADIP in advance of its arrival, during and after the briefing, which took place on 17/09/2019 at the ADIP headquarters. Additional information and further documentation were provided regarding the HQA mission, standards and guidelines of HQA accreditation process, and national framework of HEIs. In the afternoon, the Panel met in private to discuss the accreditation report for IQAS, allocate tasks and list of issues for the site visit. The Panel visited the Agricultural University of Athens (AUA) on Wednesday, 18/09/2019 for the first day. The first meeting was with the Rector, Prof. Spyridon E. Kintzios, and the Vice-Rectors Prof. Serkos A. Haroutounian (academic, administrative and student's affairs) and Prof. Stavros Zografakis (research and lifelong learning) for a short overview of the institution regarding its history, vision, mission, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), integration of new departments of TEIs and academic profile. Furthermore, useful information was provided about the AUA status, strengths and possible areas of concern. In the next meeting with the Quality Assurance Unit (QUA/MODIP) the Panel investigated the degree of compliance of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) with the Standards for Quality Accreditation and discussed matters related to quality culture. The Panel received further documentation and supporting material related to the presentations given by QUA/MODIP to facilitate their decision for AUA Quality Accreditation.

At the end of the meeting, a small group of students entered the meeting room and interrupted the procedure demonstrating against the procedure of accreditation. The meetings were held to another room for the rest of the day as well as for the following day without any further interruptions.

After the lunch break and a visit to the Agricultural Museum of AUA, the Panel meet with the faculty members, deans of the schools, heads of departments and Internal Evaluation Groups (IEGs/OMEA) representatives in a new meeting room close to the museum. The meeting facilitated the understanding of the internal evaluation review process, adequacy of resources and possible areas of weaknesses. In addition, discussions took place about the formulation of relationships among the IEGs/OMEA with QUA/MODIP. The Panel received detailed information material about the work on the development of an integrated information system by a presentation from assistant Professor Dimitris Vlachakis.

After a short debriefing meeting, the Panel returned to the hotel.

On Thursday, 19/09/2019 the visit started with meeting Undergraduate and Postgraduate students to gain an insight of their study experience and campus facilities, and their input in quality control and decision making; discuss their priority issues concerning student life, welfare, grants, mobility, research and career opportunities, and their views on recruitment, learning, progression, assessment.

A second meeting followed with the AUA Chief administrative officers to discuss the role of Institutional strategic documents (strategic plan, QA manual etc.) in the development of Institution, and special issues arising from the internal evaluation process.

Subsequently, the Panel met with Graduates and Alumni and discussed their learning experiences at AUA and their career paths.

After the lunch break, the Panel met with the external stakeholders and received information to understand better their interactions with the Institution.

After a debriefing meeting, the Panel met with the Quality Assurance Unit (QUA/MODIP) members to review several points and findings. The Panel received further clarifications.

A final meeting with the Rector of the AUA took place where the Panel presented their key findings briefly.

The Panel returned to the hotel. The following day begun working on the report of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) of AUA in accordance with the procedures provided by ADIP.

III.   Institution Profile

The AUA was founded in 1920 as an Independent Higher Education Institute with university status under the name of the Highest Agricultural School of Athens (A.G.S.A.) and it is the 3rd oldest University in Greece. In 1989, was renamed as Rural University of Athens. Finally in 1995 it was renamed Agricultural University of Athens (AUA).

The AUA serves as a centre of basic and applied research, aiming at the development of agricultural science and the self-reliance of Greek agriculture for the benefit of the agricultural population and the Greek people.

The AUA has 443 staff members, 186/117 engaging with academic/teaching and 40 for administrative duties. It has also 12071 undergraduate students, 435 postgraduate students and 367 PhD candidates. The University occupies 25 hectares in Athens including 28 building complexes comprise 42 fully organized and equipped laboratories for teaching and research, and 55 modern auditoriums and lecture rooms.

The AUA carries out education and training in the agricultural facilities of the vineyard and the arboretum. AUA also facilitates a valuable collection of plant material, the agricultural museum, the experiment installations for plants, livestock and aquatic organisms, the exemplary dairy installations and winery, the greenhouses, the farm machinery, the apiculture and beekeeping unit, the compost unit, and the Library & Information Centre. The AUA farms are situated in the city of Aliartos in Boeotia (an area of 100ha), Oropos (2.7 ha) and Yalou, municipality of Loutsa – Artemida (35 ha).

The University consists of 6 Schools, 14 Departments, with 3 of them located in other campuses in the cities of Thebes (15 ha), Amfissa (10 ha) and Carpenision (12 ha). The six Schools are: School of Plant Sciences, School of Animal Biosciences, School of Environment and Agricultural Engineering, School of Food and Nutritional Sciences, School of Applied Biology and Biotechnology, School of Applied Economics and Social Sciences.

The administration consists of the Rector, 3 Vice-Rectors, the Senate, the Deans of the Schools and the Heads of Departments. It has collaborations with Universities at a national and

International level, with over 100 MoUs, and 160 Erasmus Bilateral agreements. AUA is engaged in the pursuit of knowledge through teaching and research. It also seeks to strengthen the dialogue with society through outreach activities to the society at large.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

Principle 1: Institution Policy for Quality Assurance

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

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

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

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

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

Institution compliance

The AUA has established a quality assurance policy that is reasonable and appropriate for the Institution strategic goals. It provides access of all relevant information about the evaluation results as well as the key performance indicators (KPI) to the AUA staff, with introduced procedures that facilitate the review of those and set objectives based on the aim to maintain and improve quality. A commitment to continuous improvement of the existing procedures is included in the AUA quality assurance policy, based on ongoing measures to strengthen the review, and update of the existing courses at all levels and integrate the new departments

coming from the Technological Education Institutes (TEI). The continuous improvement of the courses is ensured through an annual update. The established system complies with the laws and regulations that govern the university. The quality assurance objectives are in line with the institutional strategy and aligned with the standards of HQA.

The Institution's internal quality assurance system (IQAS) incorporates the strategic goals of the AUA. The AUA has a handbook that describes the IQAS processes. The detailed information for the elements of each process is described in MODIP's web pages.

Despite the extreme financial constraints, it remarkable that the policy of the institution is to provide support for , the organization of AUA services and infrastructure as well as the allocation of necessary resources for the successful operation of the IQAS.

The AUA leadership, schools, departments and organisational units (MODIP, OMEAs), as well as, individual staff members have taken on their responsibilities in the IQAS to align with the relevant HQA Standards and achieve the continuous improvement of learning and teaching, research and innovation. The individual departmental OMEAs communicate issues arising from the students' questionnaires to MODIP for discussion and then the general assembly further treats it, if necessary.

The established IQAS also aims to develop links between the students and staff and the local community and industry through social and training activities.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

To communicate more effectively the scope and objectives of quality assurance to all partners and stakeholders.

Principle 2: Provision and Management of the Necessary Resources

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

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

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

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

Human resources
The Institution and the academic units are responsible for the human resources development.
The subject areas, as well as the competences and tasks of the staff members are defined by the corresponding job descriptions that are established within the operation scope of each academic or administrative unit. These posts are filled following the requirements set by the law, on the basis of transparent, fair and published processes. The continuous training and evaluation of the staff is considered necessary for the enhancement of the performance, which is recorded and monitored as provided in the context of the IQAS.
The Institution should acknowledge and provide the necessary resources for the implementation of the IQAS, its enhancement and the provision of services that assist the satisfaction of the quality assurance requirements. Moreover, the Institution (Quality Assurance Unit-QAU) should properly organise the administrative structure and staffing of the IQAS, with a clear allocation of competences and tasks to its staff members.

Institution compliance

Funding

The University has put in place a very effective and transparent system of allocation of its funds, which consist State Funds for HEIs, Public Investment Funds, and Special Accounts for

Research (ELKE), as well as from its Property Development and Management Company. Proper tools, including adequate information systems are in place to ensure their effective distribution and management. Cooperation among the officials of the university ensures the development of a realistic annual operating budget.

The Special Account for Research Funds is well structured and functions in an efficient way to support the research and development policy of the University and has received (ISO 9001:2015) for Management and Quality for its effective financial management system. The ELKE has a policy for charging overheads on the budgets of research projects, which average 10 million euros per year secured from National and EU projects. The amounts accumulated in the University's reserve funds is used to support several essential functions of its Schools and Departments related to research but also other functions (graduate student and faculty support for publications, conference participations, public relations, etc).

Infrastructure

The AUA through its Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) has put in place a procedure for allocating the appropriate funding of the educational facilities, such as teaching rooms, laboratories, auditoriums, and other facilities. These are well equipped with suitable infrastructure for using innovative teaching and research methods.
Faculty members and students informed the Accreditation Panel members of the problem of shortage of space mainly in laboratory facilities, which is due to the high number of incoming students each year, which is far higher than that proposed by the AUA. The Administration is also aware of this shortcoming and they are planning to face this problem with the acquisition of a nearby establishment (former state Lysiatreion), which is donated to the AUA from the Region of Attica. The necessary steps and Plans for this project are underway and works are expected to start in the following months.
The AUA is facing a new challenge due the recent merging of the former TEI establishments in Thebes, Amfissa and Carpenision, which have their own campuses and facilities that will need the same attentions and care for their maintenance and good operation. At the same time, this acquisition provides excellent opportunities for the enlargement and development of a greater University.

Maintenance of campus buildings and facilities (teaching rooms, labs and offices) is undertaken by the Technical Services of the University through a regular maintenance program. The outdoor spaces, surrounding alleys and gardens are maintained by the Department of Landscape of the Farm Directorate. The above procedures are described in the submitted proposal for accreditation. During the onsite visit, these services were found to work efficiently.
An efficient system of reporting and servicing malfunctioning equipment has been put in place as verified with interviews with members of the staff.
A serious concern of the Administration is the high cost of energy. There are no plans for mitigating that cost.

Working Environment
The committee visited a number of administration buildings, library and the cafeteria and met with graduate and undergraduate students, staff and faculty. The facilities and the overall appearance of the premises, are in good and clean condition, especially the main old building and nearby buildings, except for the "graffiti" found throughout the campus. Heating and air

conditioning are functioning well and sanitary facilities are clean. Students mentioned that some of the laboratory rooms are not sufficiently large to fit all students assigned to the lab.

Human resources

The Agricultural University of Athens, due to the State financial constraints, are usually understaffed in both administrative and academic staff.
The number of positions given to the University by the State even though a substantial number of staff has retired limits development of human resources. To deal with additional staffing needs the University has used a part of its overhead from the research accounts to fund contractual, limited term appointments for all of its sectors. However, educational and administrative operations of the University have not been drastically impacted. Students interviewed, stated that they were satisfied with their studies but expressed complaints with the shortage of lab spaces and equipment.
The QAU –with one staff person is barely able to coordinate all processes that contribute to the IQAS. An additional staff member and an IT person would greatly alleviate the secretarial workload and improve the efficiency of the unit. The University has already submitted a new Organizational Chart to the Ministry of Education. After its approval and implementation, it is expected that many of its operations and functions will be improved. The AP s was able to verify that there are several organized opportunities for staff development and training. The AUA has appropriate processes for monitoring the opportunities and the participation of the staff in various training workshops in Greece and abroad through the Erasmus+ staff training programs.

Panel judgement

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

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

Panel Recommendations

The development of a dedicated plan and related procedures for further improvement of the infrastructure involving exterior buildings and grounds.

A staff/faculty survey should be introduced regarding satisfaction with the work environment, as well as the organizational climate of the Institution.

Principle 3: Establishing Goals for Quality Assurance

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

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

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

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

Institution compliance

The university has established specific and measurable goals for measuring performance within a given period, which is in-line with the strategy of the organization. The institution defines clearly the goals, which are grouped into four pillars: Study Programmes/ education activities, Research and Innovation, Administration (funding, human Resources, infrastructure management), and Resources (funding, human resources, and infrastructure).

In addition, the university has developed for each pillar specific performance indicators that cover the period 2019 to 2020. For example, development of 3 ungraduated and 1 postgraduate program, increase of the number of students who graduate from 8% to 9%, increase the number of students who attending internship programs from21% to >25%, improvement of the ratio of scientific publications to teaching staff members from 47 to 49 and rise of the total research funding per faculty member to 44000 Euros etc.

AUA has announced this plan as an official roadmap with the specified goals being associated with relevant KPIs, and are accompanied by an action plan that paves the way of their feasible implementation. The university is in the process of developing an integrated management information system for the collection and analysis of the information that is needed for the monitoring of the KPIs and goals.

Panel judgement

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

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

Panel Recommendations

The institution should develop procedures for the sustainable and continuous engagement of stakeholders to enable long-term funding, human resources, and infrastructure opportunities.

The institution should establish a procedure to ensure that all departments of the AUA follow the same IQAS process.

Principle 4: Structure, Organisation and Operation of the IQAS

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

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

Structure and organisation

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

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

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

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

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

Operation

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

The above actions include:

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

> *Documentation*
>
> *The IQAS documentation includes, among other things, a series of key documents demonstrating its structure and organisation, such as the Quality Manual, which describes how the Standards' requirements are met.*
>
> *The Annexes of the Quality Manual include:*
>
> - *the Quality Policy and the Quality Assurance Objectives;*
> - *the necessary written Procedures, along with the entailed forms;*
> - *the necessary Guides, External Documents (e.g. pertinent legislation), as well as any other supporting data;*
> - *the standing organisational structure of the QAU, with a detailed description of the competences, the required qualifications and the goals for each post. The organisational chart is structured in a manner that ensures that the IQAS organisational requirements are fully and properly met.*

Institution compliance

The Quality Assurance Unit of the University (MODIP) is consistent with the existing legislative framework. The Institution's IQAS and its implementation processes are determined by the decisions of the competent bodies, as provided by the law, and have recently been published in the Government Gazette (FEK) as well as on the Institution's website. The University is in the process of developing an integrated management information system in order to facilitate the proper operation of the internal quality assurance system.

The MODIP of the institution collaborates closely with HQA, towards the development and maintenance of the management information system for storing the evaluation data, which is periodically submitted to HQA, according to the instructions. Furthermore, MODIP has successfully fulfilled up to now its responsibilities as follows:

-        the development of the policy, strategy and relevant processes towards the continuous improvement of the quality of the Institution's work and provisions;

-        the organisation, operation and continuous improvement of the Institution's internal quality assurance system;

-        the coordination and support of the evaluation process of the Institution's academic units and other services, and;

-        the support of the external evaluation and accreditation process of the Institution's programmes and internal quality assurance system.

The university has developed a quality manual that includes all the appropriate actions to ensure effective planning, implementation and control of AUA processes. The quality manual provides a clear description of inputs and outputs for each process, as well as, the associated procedures including the stages that should be followed. It also includes the way the procedures/processes are audited, measured and assessed, and how they interact.

The quality manual addresses 7 core processes, includes all the methods to achieve the quality objectives set out in the quality policy and describes how the requirements are met. It provides the necessary guides, pertinent legislation, and other supporting data. The AUA is in the process of amending the organizational chart to ensure that the university is structured in such a manner, safeguarding that the IQAS organizational requirements are properly met. Overall, the quality manual is appropriate. The institution has developed indicators that the processes are being carried out as planned.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The university should consider to include in the Quality Policy statement a list of all the core processes together with the procedures that are in place so as to indicate clearly the way the continues improvement is implemented.

The university should develop a procedure for collecting information for continuous course development and engaging with internal and external stakeholders.

The AUA should provide adequate human resources and infrastructure to the QAU.

Principle 5: Self-Assessment

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Institution compliance

The AUA has established and published detailed self-assessment procedures for performing the annual quality assessments for each area of activity described in the quality assurance manual. These procedures of the IQAS for collecting, processing and analysing the quality data regarding the educational, research and academic activities as well as data pertaining to the administrative

functions are described clearly and in detail in the Quality Manual. With respect to the educational program, the IQAS collects data to assess the quality of the programs of study, learning outcomes, student progress, and the quality of the infrastructure and services as they impact on the learning process. Errors and weaknesses identified through the internal assessment are documented and circulated to the appropriate organs within the university. At these stage the process of analysis and the drawing of conclusions is incomplete.

Input data to the IQAS include quality assessment goals, student information, as well as data pertaining to the information system of MODIP, institution infrastructure, personnel, ELKE, as well as data pertaining to the research activities. Outputs are indices describing the effectiveness of the IQAS, the evaluation of the strategic plan of the university, KPIs, data and indicators provided by ADIP. The Quality Manual includes a detailed description of the indices, methods for assessing the quality of the processes, and steps for improving the quality of the process.

The university has developed a strategic plan for the period 2019-2022 that identifies seeks to formulate the mission of the university in the context of evolving national objectives in the field of higher education. The plan seeks to carve out a broadened role for the university from the traditional field of agriculture to include production, processing, servicing and commerce. To this end, the plan includes a comprehensive discussion of the strengths and weaknesses in the current state of the university as well as the opportunities presented. With respect to the educational mission of the university, a major weakness lies in the state of the university infrastructure, particularly, the absence of a unified information processing system that makes it difficult to integrate the data from the various components of the university.

The plan identifies specific actions to be taken to attain excellence in learning and teaching, research, international outreach, as well as the utilization of the research findings by the broader economy. The plan has special provisions for assessing and improving the quality of educational and research functions of the university. However, these provisions have been implemented to a small degree. One of the reasons is the absence of the unified information system. Even taking that into account, the analysis of the collected data is elementary. From the record submitted by the university and on the basis of discussions with the various stakeholders during the site visit, it has become evident that except for some rudimentary statistical analysis, a systematic analysis of the data collected by the IQAS is rudimentary at best. Regarding the course evaluations, the confidence level on the results of the processing of the data is small because of the low participation level of the respondents. One of the reasons could be the use of paper questionnaires instead of electronic ones.

In conclusion, the evaluation team has found that the AUA has a well thought out operational plan for ensuring the quality of operation of the various components of the institution. However, the implementation of the plan is weak.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Improve the procedures for analysing the quality data, drawing conclusions and develop recommendations for improving the quality of education and research programs.

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

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

> *The QAU should establish and operate an information system to manage the data required for the implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System.*
>
> *The QAU measures and monitors the performance of the various activities of the Institution, through appropriate procedures established in the context of the IQAS structure, and assesses their level of effectiveness. The measuring and monitoring is conducted on a basis of indices and data provided by HQA in the pertinent guidelines and forms, which are part of the National Information System for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (NISQA). These measurements may concern: the size of the student body, the size of the teaching and administrative staff, the infrastructure, the structural components of the curricula, students' performance, research activity performance, financial data, feedback on student and faculty satisfaction surveys, data related to the teaching and research activity, services, infrastructure, etc.*
>
> *The QAU makes use of the figures and presents the results for consideration using statistical analysis. Outcomes are displayed through histograms and charts. This sort of information is used by the Institution for decision making, at all levels, pursuing improvement, as well as for setting, monitoring, assessing and reviewing the Institution's strategic and operational goals.*

Institution compliance

The measuring and monitoring are conducted on a basis of indices and data provided by HQA in the pertinent guidelines and forms, which are part of the National Information System for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (NISQA).

The MODIP currently operates a data collection system that, in the case of student evaluation of instruction, is based on paper. Other information is collected from the student records office, accounting office, ELKE, library and from external sources currently using email. The institution is in the process of developing an automated data collection system, which will replace the existing processes. The proposed system will measure and monitor the performance of the various activities of the Institution.

Data are collected regularly and cover all relevant areas (students, administrative staff, teaching, research & innovation, infrastructure and finance). The current paper questionnaires of evaluation of instruction generates about 30,000 surveys that the MODIP staff manually scans and checks for errors, a humongous task for the limited MODIP staff. Currently there are only two permanent MODIP staff members. The situation is going to improve in March 2020 with the hiring of another permanent staff and certainly will greatly improve after the new automated system will be in place. Still there is a need of a permanent MODIP IT staff.

Student evaluation of instruction is based on paper questionnaires every semester and course. Both lecture and labs are evaluated using different forms. During the meetings we had with students and alumni it became evident that most students do not participate in these surveys,

as they do not see their value. Additionally, the mechanisms and procedures for addressing complaints by students are not clear. Usually, such issues are addressed ad hoc at the departmental level whenever they arise. In addition, there were no satisfaction surveys from the staff and faculty.

Through the established IQAS mechanisms, the institution monitors the collected data and the performance metrics. The results from the internal and external reviews are diligently considered and implemented in the continuous improvement process using procedures established by individual departments.

Panel judgement

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

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

Panel Recommendations

1. The institution shall develop an integrated management information system.
2. Course evaluations should be performed online in every course, every semester and invite input from all students to increase the statistical significance of the data collected and develop a mechanism for providing feedback to the students and addressing identified problems.
3. Develop a process where student complaints related to courses can be easily addressed.

Principle 7: Public Information

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

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

Institution compliance

The overall picture of the website of the Agricultural University of Athens is rather positive. Information provided is useful to current and/or prospective students, as well as to other visitors. Although the website has breadth and depth of information covering all Schools and Departments (including the newly incorporated ones-formerly TEIs), some of the information may not be easy to locate. Many of the pages of the University's central site provide links to other websites maintained independently by academic and other departments resulting in the loss of the uniformity of web information.

Finally, there is a lack of detailed information in English, except for specific departments and units of the university (i.e. International Office).

Information about teaching and academic activities is publicly accessible via the Institution's website including information about Schools and Academic Departments, their programs of study, their structures, faculty, laboratories and their research activities.

Other significant shortcomings:

a.   Inconsistent presentation of information, which contributes to added difficulty in locating key information.

b.   Dissimilarities in the manner in which similar information is presented. For instance, course outlines of certain departments are provided in a format that explains the derivation of the ECTS credits for each course, while for other courses this is lacking.

c.   Absence of curriculum structures and study guides for graduate programs. (Only reference to the State Gazette).

d.   The AP found that the allocation of ECTS to courses taught in some Departments is not considered satisfactory and according to set rules, therefore they should be carefully reconsidered. Diploma Supplement (DS) are not issued and are not available to students upon graduation.

Curriculum structure and courses are available on Departmental websites. Modes of attendance and the criteria for student assessment are provided through the course outlines.

The CVs of faculty members and other academic staff are available online, however they do not appear in a uniform format.

Information pertaining to Quality Assurance and to such units as the University's Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) is also available.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

1. All webpages of graduate programs of study should be carefully revisited and updated.

2. Information pertaining to Quality Assurance and to such units as the University's Quality Assurance Unit (QAU), the University's Research Center, should be made available in English.

3. All information found in the Greek web site should also be made available in the English web site.

4. Provide key information, which are common among all Departments, (i.e. Programs of Study, Academic staff CVs, Course Outlines, Program Guides, etc.) in a uniform manner.

5.   The ECTS for all courses should be re-evaluated in order to reflect the actual student workload.

Principle 8: External Evaluation and Accreditation of the IQAS

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

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

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

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

Institution compliance

The Agricultural University of Athens (AUA) underwent an institutional evaluation in May 2016. In addition, all departments previously underwent a successful external evaluation in 2010 -11. The AUA has drafted and submitted a detailed follow-up report in direct response to the last institution evaluation by the HQA. AUA has already fulfilled part of them successfully and progress in the other tasks was reported with budget limitations. Furthermore, the institution's MODIP and OMEAs have prepared the accreditations of the departmental study programs.

Panel judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

To stronger, engage the students, local authorities and industry within the procedures for the continuous improvement.

To timely, improve the information system infrastructure and the resources (personnel) for the MODIP.

Alumni and external stakeholders are not sufficient engaged in the quality assurance processes. Nevertheless, there are collaborating with the Institution with new initiatives in the field of resources acquisition providing additional opportunities for improvement.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I.   Features of Good Practice

- A remarkable number of research and development projects.
- A substantial number of international cooperation agreements and other internationalisation activities pursued by the administration (e.g. honorary titles awarded to personalities of politics, arts and business).
- A good rapport with the stakeholder community.

II.   Areas of Weakness

- Quality assurance culture is not sufficiently embedded in the entire institutions community.
- There is no procedure for engaging internal and external stakeholders during the process of course development and review.
- Very limited information provided in the English version of the web side.

III.   Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- The development of a dedicated plan and related procedures for the further improvement of the infrastructure involving exterior buildings and grounds.
- The development of procedures for the sustainable and continuous engagement of stakeholders to enable long-term funding, human resources, and infrastructure opportunities.
- The development of a procedure for collecting information for continuous course development and engaging with internal and external stakeholders.
- The ECTS for all courses should be re-evaluated in order to reflect the actual student workload.
- The Web site of the institution should be revisited and updated to provide the same information in English as in Greek language for all units and academic department.
- A procedure should be established to ensure the same IQAS process is followed by all 24 departments of the AUA.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are:

3. Establishing goals for Quality Assurance

8. External evaluation and accreditation of the IQAS

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are:

1. Institution Policy for Quality Assurance

2. Provision and management of the necessary resources

4. Structure, Organization and Operation of the IQAS

5. Self-assessment

6. Collection of Quality Data: measuring, analysis and improvement

7. Public information

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are: None

The Principles where failure of compliance was identified are: None

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

The members of the Accreditation Panel for the IQAS of the University of Agricultural University of Athens

Name and Surname   Signature

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