



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ  
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



Εθνική Αρχή  
Ανώτατης Εκπαίδευσης  
Hellenic Authority  
for Higher Education

Αριστείδου 1 & Ευριπίδου 2 • 10559 Αθήνα | 1 Aristidou str. & 2 Evripidou str. • 10559 Athens, Greece  
T. +30 210 9220 944 • F. +30 210 9220 143 • E. secretariat@ethaae.gr • [www.ethaae.gr](http://www.ethaae.gr)

# Accreditation Report for the Undergraduate Study Programme of:

**Social Theology and Christian Culture**

**Institution: Aristotle University of Thessaloniki**

**Date: 18 March 2023**



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



Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the Undergraduate Study Programme of **Social Theology and Christian Culture** of the **Aristotle University of Thessaloniki** for the purposes of granting accreditation.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

|   |           |
|---|-----------|
| <b>Part A: Background and Context of the Review</b> .....                         | <b>4</b>  |
| I.    The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel.....                          | 4         |
| II.   Review Procedure and Documentation .....                                    | 5         |
| III.  Study Programme Profile .....   | 9         |
| <b>Part B: Compliance with the Principles .....</b>                               | <b>11</b> |
| Principle 1: Academic Unit Policy for Quality Assurance.....                      | 11        |
| Principle 2: Design and Approval of Programmes .....                              | 13        |
| Principle 3: Student-centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment.....               | 16        |
| Principle 4: Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification .....  | 19        |
| Principle 5: Teaching Staff .....   | 22        |
| Principle 6: Learning Resources and Student Support .....                         | 26        |
| Principle 7: Information Management .....   | 28        |
| Principle 8: Public Information .....   | 31        |
| Principle 9: On-going Monitoring and Periodic Internal Review of Programmes ..... | 33        |
| Principle 10: Regular External Evaluation of Undergraduate Programmes.....        | 35        |
| <b>Part C: Conclusions .....</b>  | <b>37</b> |
| I.    Features of Good Practice .....   | 37        |
| II.   Areas of Weakness .....   | 37        |
| III.  Recommendations for Follow-up Actions .....                                 | 37        |
| IV.  Summary & Overall Assessment .....   | 38        |

## **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 **Social Theology and Christian Culture** of the **Aristotle University of Thessaloniki** comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

- 1. Professor Stephanos Efthymiadis (Chair)**  
Open University of Cyprus, Cyprus
- 2. Professor Rev. Ján Zozulák**  
Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Slovakia
- 3. Professor Predrag Dragutinović**  
University of Belgrade, Serbia
- 4. Professor Rev. Emmanuel Agius**  
University of Malta, Malta
- 5. Mr Spartakos Tanasidis**  
University of Ioannina, Greece

## II. Review Procedure and Documentation

The Accreditation Panel (henceforth AP) received from the HAHE the review documentations on the 23<sup>rd</sup> of February 2023 and was invited to attend a virtual induction presentation by HAHE's Director General Dr. Christina Besta. This was held on Tuesday, 28 February 2023 and was meant to introduce AP to the standards and guidelines of the accreditation process, and the national framework for the Higher Educations Institutions.

The dates for the AP visit were set from the 12<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> of March 2023. Prof. Stephanos Efthymiadis, Prof. Predrag Dragutinović, and Mr. Spartakos Tanasidis participated virtually in the process of accreditation, while Prof. Emmanuel Agius and Prof. Ján Zozulák had a physical participation.

The accreditation process started at 9.30am with a meeting on the 12<sup>th</sup> of March. A briefing was conducted by the Chair of AP explaining the role and mission of its members and an allocation of tasks followed. At 11.00am the two members of the AP were transferred to the building of the School of Social Theology and Christian Culture where they were welcomed by the Head of the School and a number of academic staff members. At noon AP had an interview with Prof. Dimitrios Koveos, Vice-Rector of the University, and Prof. Apostolos Kralidis, Head of the Department. They both briefed AP about the structure of the undergraduate programme of studies (history, academic profile), current status, strengths, and possible areas of concern and development.

Following this meeting, AP met a representation of members of OMEA and MODIP. Prof. Antonis Goulas from the School of Medicine, spoke about the remit, significance, and importance of MODIP, while Prof. Ekaterini Tsalampouni, Co-ordinator of OMEA, gave a detailed report on the internal structures of academic evaluation of the Study Programme, assignments, dissertations, theses, and exam papers within the Department. The following members of OMEA were also in attendance: Prof. Demetrios Nikolakakis. Prof. Anna Karamanidou, Prof. Soultana Lamprou, Assoc. Prof. Demosthenis Kaklamanos, and Rev. Assis. Prof. Chrysostomos Nassis. Mrs Alexandra Tzaniaki, MODIP Secretary, Dr. Konstantinos Aivazidis, Quality Management Official and Mrs Eleni Bitsiadou, MODIP Secretariat, were also in attendance. AP raised a number of pertinent questions in order to get more information about the rebranding, design, structure, learning outcomes, basic criteria, and quality assurance of the programmes of studies.

Later on, AP had a new meeting with the following academic staff members:

- Assoc. Prof. Ioannis Bakas, Deputy Head of the School, Director of Eusebius Lab, Studies Counselor
- Prof. Theodoros Giagou, Former Dean of the Faculty of Theology, Studies Counselor
- Prof. Konstantinos Christou, Former Head of the School, Director of the Postgraduate Programme "Greece: Church History and Culture", Studies Counselor

- Prof. Symeon Paschalidis, Former Head of the School, Director of the Postgraduate Programme “Mount Athos: Studies in its History, Spirituality, Art and Music”, Study Counselor
- Rev. Prof. Athanasios Gkikas, Supervisor the Programme of Pastoral Training and Counseling • Prof. Athanasios Paparnakis, Member of the Committee of Finances of the School
- Prof. Miltiadis Vantsos, Member of the Bioethics Committee of the School, Member of the Environment Committee of the School
- Assist. Prof. Evangelos Pepes, ECTS and Erasmus Coordinator, Head of the Lab of Pedagogics and Responsible for the Pedagogical and Teaching Competence Certificate
- Assist. Prof. Stylianos Charalampidis, Member of the webpage committee, member of Crisis Management Committee of the School
- Dr. Eleni Antonopoulou, Special Teaching Staff (EEDIP), Member of the Committee of the Students’ Handbook of Undergraduate Studies

The academic staff introduced themselves and gave information about their role and remits at the School and answered the questions of AP regarding their teaching load, research projects and activities, interdisciplinarity, participation in conferences and the Erasmus+ programme, and their contact hours with students. The issues of the implementation of the goals and objectives of the Study Programme and the learning outcomes, as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the Programme were also discussed.

On Tuesday 14 March, AP had an interview with eleven students of the Department, both Greek and non-Greek nationals. Students were representative of the four-year Study Programme and reflected the international dimension of the School. They all gave a very positive evaluation of the Department and spoke highly about their professors’ competence, availability, and care for their progress. They also highlighted their motivations for reading for a degree in Social Theology and Christian Culture and their expectations for employment after their graduation. AP raised a number of issues to the students concerning the Erasmus exchange programme, the number of elective courses offered, the virtual learning possibilities, options for improvement of their Study Programme, and their expectations from the teaching staff.

Following to that, AP visited the classrooms, lecture halls, libraries, the chapel, the computer room, the three laboratories, and had talks with the administrative staff. During this visit AP were accompanied by a number of academic staff members who explained to them the various facilities and how they are assisting their students in the learning outcomes of the Study Programme.

The next meeting was with the graduates of the Department. The following graduates participated either physically or virtually:

- Metropolitan of Kydonia and Apokoronou, Damaskinos
- Metropolitan of Neapolis and Stavroupolis, Barnabas
- Assoc. Prof. Paschalis Valsamidis, Democritus University of Thrace
- Prof. Emmanuel Karageorgoudis, University of Athens
- Assoc. Prof. Vassiliki Mavroska, AEEA
- Dr. Victor Nedeski, University of Skopje
- Dr. Lampros Patsavellas, Deputy Prosecutor at the Court of Appeal
- Mrs Niki Chioteli, Director of Piraeus Bank
- Dr. Konstantinos Papadakis, Digital Library Anemi, University of Crete
- Mr Evangelos Tsikouras, Mount Athos Centre

Graduates spoke very positively about their experience at the Department and remarked that their success is owed to the ethos of the School which offered them a solid foundation for an academic and a holistic humanistic formation. AP posed a number of questions to graduates concerning how they link their current mission in society with the formation they received at the Department. Moreover, they were requested to comment on what they think about the Department's rebranding, the relevance of the academic programme to today's changing culture, and whether they would currently recommend students to read for a degree at the Department.

The next meeting was with the following employers and social partners of the Department:

- Metropolitan of Neas Krinis and Kalamaria, Ioustinos
- Bishop Nikiphoros, Abbot of Vlatadon Monastery, President of the Patriarchal Research Institute of Vlatadon
- Vasileios Pappas, President of the Society for Macedonian Studies
- Mr Theodoros Ekklesiarchos, Chariseion Residential and Nursing Care Home
  - Mr George Basdaris, SOS Children Villages
- Mrs Evropi Papadopoulou, School Advisor of Religion in Secondary Education
- Mr George Kyritsis, Director of Thermi High School
- Mrs Maria Pharsiarotou, Director of 19th Secondary School
- Mrs Smaragda Faridou, 1st Experimental School of Toumpa
- Mrs Aikaterini Galoni, Director of Ecclesiastical Secondary School of Neapolis and Stavroupolis

They all commented very positively about the academic formation of the students whom they engage in their respective sectors and on their human qualities and skills which students acquire thanks to the ethos of the Department.

The final meeting was with OMEA and MODIP representatives. AP met *in camera* prior to this meeting for a preliminary discussion about their impressions they got from the Department and for how these were to be communicated to the OMEA and MODIP representatives. AP agreed

to assign to its Chair the task of briefing to the representatives of OMEA and MODIP about the strengths and weaknesses of the Department. At the end of this meeting the Vice-Rector of the University and the academic staff of the Department thanked AP for their comments and overall contribution to the evaluation process.

On the next days (Wednesday, 15 March to Saturday, 18 March 2023) the AP convened for the purpose of putting together their impressions and working on the present report.

AP would like to highlight the substantial work carried out by the University and the Department in preparing a material which was rich in terms of quantity and quality and much helpful for the evaluation process. It also acknowledges that all meetings and interviews were marked by a spirit of collegiality and mutual understanding of roles and missions.



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

The Department of Social Theology and Christian Culture (former Department of Pastoral and Social Theology) is one of the two departments of the School of Theology at the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. The Faculty of Theology was founded in 1942 with three departments finally being established in 1964: Theology, Pastoral Studies, and Social Ministry. In 1982, two independent theological Departments were founded in the School: a) the one of Theology, and b) the one of Pastoral Theology. In 1994 the Department under review was renamed “Department of Pastoral and Social Theology” and in 2020 it got its current name, “Department of Social Theology and Christian Culture”. This change was decided to reflect more concretely the content and goals of the Department as it is expressed through its Study Programme.

The Study Programme was fully reformed in 2012 when the number of its courses was reduced and updated and its structure changed. In 2015/16 the Study Programme was revised in compliance with the recommendations of the 2013 External Evaluation and in order to organize the courses in a way that would be conformed to the then new law on pedagogical competence. In 2019/20 the Study Programme was again revised. Taking into consideration the feedback of the electronic evaluation of the Study Programme by the students and the experience gained by running the Programme that was previously offered, the structure of the semesters was modified (by transferring courses from one semester to another) and the Pastoral/Social direction (as an alternative to the Pedagogical direction) was introduced. Currently, the Department is in the process of revising its programme again in an endeavour to reflect its objectives and its rebranding more clearly. This new reform will also take into consideration the results of the accreditation process run by HAHE.

The Programme spreads over eight (8) semesters and offers fifty-six (56) courses (study-units). These are divided into the following categories: core (Y), core elective courses (YE), and elective courses (EE). Core courses are offered in the first two years of studies and provide students with foundational knowledge in theology, philosophy, and research methodology (26 in number, namely 47% of the courses of the programme, corresponding to 112 ECTS). The core elective courses (22 in number, namely 39% of the courses of the programme, corresponding to 96 ECTS) are offered in years 3 and 4 of the undergraduate studies. Additionally, during their studies, students should attend 8 elective courses (14% of the courses in the curriculum, corresponding to 32 ECTS) choosing from a wide range of optional courses offered by the School or other Schools of the University. In the last two years of their studies, students have to follow either

the Pedagogical track if they wish to obtain the Pedagogical Competence Certificate or the Pastoral track if they wish to work in pastoral care and counselling. The Study Programme does not include the option of a final BA Thesis, but it does include practicum either in Pedagogics or in pastoral work experience. However, it is expected that students submit an assignment in the majority of their courses.

The courses offered in the Programme partly reflect the current developments in theological studies and research and combine theoretical knowledge with acquiring practical experience.

To obtain the degree, students must take a total of 240 ECTS. The student workload is distributed on the basis of the learning demands of the courses.

The Department's graduates can work as teachers in Secondary Education schools, as clergymen and Church administration staff, as researchers in academic research institutes focusing on the study of Christian culture, and as public servants. Furthermore, its degree provides the necessary qualifications for post-graduate studies in Theology or similar disciplines.

## 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 organisation 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 Department of Social Theology and Christian Culture has established a Quality Assurance Policy for the Undergraduate Programme that is in line with the general Institutional Policy on Quality of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. The responsible institution for applying the

Quality Assurance process is the Internal Evaluation Committee (OMEA) in effective collaboration with MODIP.

The Department has set as its main goals to instruct and train students for being employed as a teaching staff in the primary and secondary education in Greece, become members of the Orthodox Church, conduct research on what pertains to Christian culture, and work in the public and private sectors in professions related to their studies. To this effect, it has shaped a Study Programme which aims to promote interdisciplinarity, combine academic knowledge with practical training, and support the dialogue of Orthodox theology with other fields in the social sciences and social well-being.

In the opinion of AP the Department is working seriously for continuous improvement. OMEA coordinates the work of internal evaluations and is variously assisted by the Council of the Department, its divisions, and the committee responsible for the Study Programme. The Study Programme underwent a serious phase of transformation in 2018 and the Department has now decided to renew it again once accreditation is granted by the HAHE. OMEA collaborates both with MODIP and HAHE in different respects. The results of this collaboration are communicated to members of the Department every year and are taken seriously into account.

AP endorses this approach and interest in periodical self-assessment and is pleased to note that the Department complies with the principle.

### **Panel Judgement**

| <b>Principle 1: Academic Unit Policy for Quality Assurance</b> |   |
|--|---|
| Fully compliant  | √ |
| Substantially compliant  |   |
| Partially compliant  |   |
| Non-compliant  |   |

### **Panel Recommendations**

None.

## 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 Department seeks to provide high quality education in the academic field of Social Theology and Christian Culture and to promote theological scholarship in general. It aims to prepare teachers who will be involved in the religious education, as well as to contribute to the study of theology, religion, social engagement, and culture. The Department aspires that academic knowledge would be implemented in professional and social life. The institutional strategy is well defined and easily available online, namely on the website of the Department in the Student Handbook. The Programme has been reviewed and revised three times in the last decade (2012/13; 2015/16; 2019/20) with the aim of being improved and accommodated to the current developments in scholarship and societal needs.

The duration of the programme that leads to the degree in Social Theology and Christian Culture is eight (8) semesters and the student workload is equivalent to 240 ECTS. To obtain this degree,

students are required to attend and be successfully examined in fifty-six (56) courses. Twenty-six (26) of them are mandatory (112 ETCS), twenty-two are mandatory elective (96 ETCS), and eight (8) are freely elective corresponding to a total of 32 ECTS. Descriptions of the courses offered each semester are available online. Elective courses can be chosen from different Faculties of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki.

Students participate actively in the academic procedures. There are four (4) work labours: pedagogical, liturgical, one for biblical studies, and one for studies in history. Through the courses and work labours, the Department fulfils the highest standards for scholarly work and research. The Study Programme is so composed as to pursue an interdisciplinary approach to the interface of Theology and cultural and social issues. There is a remarkable creativity to be noticed, especially because the Programme contains courses devoted to current highly sensitive and thorny social issues, such as ecology, gender-studies, bioethics, etc. Students are well trained to work in public schools, in the Church, as researchers in research centres and in different areas of the public sector. Still during their studies, they have the opportunity to work in public schools and parishes (for a maximum of two months). This connection between theoretical knowledge and social engagement helps them to find a proper position at the labour market. The assessment of external stakeholders, social partners, and external co-workers with whom the Department collaborates is thoroughly positive and encouraging.

Students' progress is regularly monitored throughout different stages of the Programme, although many students do not sit for exams on a regular basis. Students, graduates, and stakeholders interviewed by AP agreed that the Programme fulfils the goals formulated in the strategy of the Department.

With regard to the relevant regulatory framework, there are two administrative boards for the internal control of the quality of the programme (OMEA and MODIP). They take care about the regularity of the official procedure for the approval of the programme by the institution. During the evaluation process, AP had meetings with members of OMEA and MODIP, and the outcomes of the discussions are deemed to have been very satisfactory.

## Panel Judgement

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

## Panel Recommendations

- The Department should trace the reasons for the high number of inactive students and the slow rhythm of the progress of active students
- The Department should seriously explore ways and means to motivate inactive students or demotivated students
- The Department should increase the number of elective courses

### **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**

Undergraduate students are the main focus of the Study Programme of the Department and are systematically encouraged to become active participants in the learning process. They evaluate the quality and effectiveness of teaching regularly and on a semester basis.

The Department offers 26 core courses, 22 core elective courses, and 8 elective courses. As a result, the design of the curriculum offers to the students a flexibility in their choices, within clearly defined parameters. This allows students to shape their own curriculum in a way that suits their particular interests as well as their academic profile and professional goals.



Interviewed undergraduates and graduates expressed their satisfaction vis-à-vis the curriculum. Employers shared satisfaction with the quality of studies offered by the Department. Foreign students who were interviewed expressed the desire to be taught Ancient Greek at the basic level, since they have not followed any such course in the countries of their origin. The same foreign students pointed out the need to shift certain study units which involve Ancient Greek from the first year to the second or third year. Greek and foreign students recommended to have an introductory course on Greek theological language. Those taking courses in icon-painting expressed their concern to be awarded a certificate of proficiency once they complete their training. Yet, as the Department assessed, this clashes with the general regulations and bureaucracy of the University.

Furthermore, students recommended a substantial number of lectures to be delivered late afternoon or in the evening in order to facilitate attendance of those working. Also, the teaching staff is encouraged to record a number of their lectures and upload them in the electronic platforms of the Department. Hybrid lectures are also recommended.

The Department is equipped with facilities to accommodate students with learning and other disabilities, and provides psychological support to ensure that all students have equal access to buildings, offices of the teaching staff, and materials of instruction and examination. The Department offers an adequate guidance to students from their first semester through their graduation. Study Advisors are important to assist students in their whole trajectory. By virtue of the practicum that has been integrated into the curriculum, the Department offers internship opportunities.

Regarding the evaluation of their courses, students' satisfaction is high. Students are invited to fill out a questionnaire submitted electronically at the end of each semester. However, evaluation, being not mandatory, does not reflect reality due to the low participation of students.

Students interviewed confirmed that the Department's Secretariat is fully efficient and ready to help in a timely manner. The online secretarial services are satisfactory and statements, certificates, and other documents are processed in the same day after a student's request. In cases of dissatisfaction, students may submit their complaint to the Department's Council or the Student Advocate.

AP was pleased to note the Department's commitment to the principles of student-centred learning and teaching. Students attested to being supported and encouraged by staff members in their learning pursuits.

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

- Consolidate the study of Ancient Greek (esp. Biblical and Patristic) in the curriculum
- Foster interest in the process of the evaluation of teaching staff by the students
- Explore innovative good practices in terms of teaching and lecturing by means of electronic platforms

## **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 last external evaluation (2013) suggested following points of improvement: 1. consider decreasing the number of mandatory courses; 2. think of courses in contemporary social theory and pastoral psychology as a way to open the interests of the department even more to the demands of contemporary society; 3. present the goals, methods for their implementation, and assessment of results in a more systematic way, and use these to inform future changes; 4. engage in a more thorough dialogue with outside partners (Church, civil society, alumni); 5. develop an even closer dialogue and cooperation with other disciplines, which could potentially lead even to interdisciplinary programs in the future; 6. consider the creation of a series with international standards aiming at editing and commenting on primary sources; and 7. explore the possibility of distance learning for those students who, for financial reasons, are unable to attend classes. AP can assess that almost all the above suggestions were taken seriously from the Department and that an obvious progress has been made in many respects since 2013.

The Department carries out the processes of admission and certification according to the regulations of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and the state law in Greece. The information about the Study Programme and the organization of the Department are easily available to students on the webpage (Student Handbook). Alongside admission information on the website, during the first two weeks of October the programme offers open days and welcome-information sessions to newcomers. Students expressed their gratitude to the

teaching staff for properly presenting the programme to new students supporting their transition from high school to university. Generally, teachers and administrative staff seem to be always available when assistance is needed, and that helps students to smoothly progress through all stages of their studies. However, judging from the slow pace that a considerable number of active students has their studies completed, the progression, taken as a whole, is not at a satisfactory level. Nevertheless, some improvement in this regard is to be noticed since more and more students get their degree faster in the past few years. The teaching staff makes every effort to help students who encounter problems in progressing through their studies. The excessively high number of students enrolled in the Department is also to be noted but this situation is beyond the Department's control.

The Department participates in the Erasmus+ program. Erasmus mobility is actively promoted by the Department, since extroversion and contacts with the international academia is one of the strategic goals in its quality system. The Department has signed numerous agreements with Universities across Europe (43). Students regularly receive emails about various mobility options to different academic institutions. However, according to the internal review, students have not so far shown any interest to participate in mobility programmes (only 9 students took advantage of Erasmus mobility in the past years), at least during the undergraduate studies. The teaching staff mentioned that economic problems faced by students are also at play. As a matter of fact, Erasmus does not cover all the costs of the studies abroad.

Students are constantly requested to evaluate teachers and courses, but a low number of students respond to this process. Admittedly, this is an endemic issue to be resolved by Universities today, and there is a need to seriously think how to motivate students to participate in this educational procedure.

The Study Programme offers an opportunity to follow elective courses. Only 8 freely elective courses are available for students. Only two courses can be chosen from the other Department of the School. Students from the Department of Theology often take elective courses from the Department of Social Theology and Christian Culture, but vice-versa this is not the case.

AP strongly believes that the number of elective courses should be increased. The lack of cooperation between two Departments in this regard is a serious problem which needs to be addressed.

The Programme of the Department offers theoretical knowledge, but also aims at developing the skills and social competencies of the students in order to enhance the possibility for them

to find a job at the labour market. Practical training during the study is well coordinated and supported by different external partners and networks. The Department considers practical training an essential part of the Programme, both in terms of developing job-specific skills and enhancing the chances of post-graduation employment. External stakeholders from the labour market with whom the Department collaborates assessed that the Department is quite successful in this regard.

### Panel Judgement

| <b>Principle 4: Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification</b> |   |
|---|---|
| Fully compliant   |   |
| Substantially compliant   | √ |
| Partially compliant   |   |
| Non-compliant   |   |

### Panel recommendations

- Increase the number of elective courses to be taken from the other department of the school
- Promote the Erasmus+ mobility of students
- Motivate and empower students to evaluate teachers and courses

## 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 recognise 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

AP met several academic staff members who have particular responsibilities and remits at the Department, such as directorship of the labs of Pedagogics and postgraduate programmes of studies, supervision of training in pastoral programmes, coordinating Erasmus+, and webpage committee.

During the meeting of AP with the academic staff the following issues were discussed: professional development opportunities, mobility, workload, evaluation of students, competency and adequacy of the teaching methodology, link between teaching and research, the involvement of the academic staff in applied research, interdisciplinarity, publications, research activities and projects, collegiality, strengths and weaknesses of the Study Programme.

Though it was not the remit of the AP to look into the details of any recruitment or promotion procedure, neither to assess their outcome, during the meetings this issue has emerged. Academic staff members confirmed, first, that recruitments and promotions of the academic staff happened according to the criteria and procedures set by the Greek legislation and, second, that promotions from one academic rank to the higher one occur within a reasonable amount of time. The procedure seems to be open, transparent, fair, and based on meritocracy. Therefore, as far as recruitment and promotions are concerned, the relevant procedures are

followed appropriately. However, no training in academic proficiency, professional development, and the upgrading from one academic post to another are offered by the University. This is a good practice which the Department might recommend to the University for the benefit of both staff and students.

During the discussion, it transpired that the standard teaching load of academic staff is approximately seven hours per week. No benchmarking of the number of study-units (ECTS) is set by the University for a full-time lecturer. This might create an imbalance in the teaching-load among professors. Most academic staff have several administrative duties (Chair or Vice-Chair of the Department, Senate member; member of the OMEA and the MODIP; Erasmus+ coordinator, etc.). Nevertheless, they confirmed that they find sufficient time for research and contact with students. Staff members participate in research networks, collaborate with local and international research institutes and engage themselves in the public debate on issues of national and international import. Staff members showed genuine efforts to link their research activity with teaching experience for the benefit of students. It is noteworthy that the young staff members are more prone to publish their research in other language than Greek. Publications in English should be encouraged to map the Department on the international landscape. The lack of financial resources available for research projects is a major obstacle to embark on major robust research projects. However, in spite of these obstacles, staff members are impressively conscious and conscientious of their commitment to research and publication. Maybe the Department could engage in lateral thinking to secure financial resources for research from outside the University platform, such as big local companies and foreign research institutions.

AP thinks that the teaching and research environment is not only appropriate to the Study Programme but also inspiring. The infrastructure of the Department offers academic staff the possibility to use facilities such as e-class, computers, projectors, audio systems, and so on. The available facilities are used in different ways, according to the nature and style of their classes. Innovation and creativity are noticeable in the staff's genuine efforts in teaching and research. The students interviewed did not identify any issues regarding the use of new technologies but highlighted that more material could be made available on e-class.

Interdisciplinarity is one of the hallmarks of the Department. Academic staff members have a gamut of academic degrees, many of them have two degrees in two different but related areas. The fact that a number of the academic staff members have studies or carried out research at

European Universities is highly commendable since the Department could have a broader exposure to the European landscape. It is important that contacts with European academic institutions, where professors have carried out parts of their research, would be retained and consolidated in order to encourage colleagues and students to further their research and postgraduate studies at these Universities. It is praiseworthy that the Department is servicing other Faculties, thereby consolidating academic cooperation and interdisciplinarity at the University.

Academic staff members of the Department of Social Theology and Christian Culture are fulfilling successfully their three-pronged vision and mission. First, they are contributing to mediate theology to social reality and to today's cultural change by engaging themselves in an interdisciplinary dialogue among themselves and other academic staff members of the University. In this way, the Department is proactively offering its academic service to the University at large by offering a broader horizon of meaning to other disciplines. Secondly, staff members are offering a sterling service to society as a whole through their unflinching commitment and generous service to consolidate the cultural identity of the nation. Thirdly, staff members are servicing the Orthodox Church through consultancy, engagement in many Church institutions, and the training of religious educators and pastoral ministers.

Collegiality and cooperation are conspicuous among the staff members and students who cooperate with each other, assist each other, and carry out research projects as a team. These features have a ripple effect on the standard and quality of teaching and set a role model to students. In fact, students have spoken very highly about their professors, their competence, sense of commitment, availability, and care.

### Panel Judgement

| <b>Principle 5: Teaching Staff</b> |   |
|------------------------------------|---|
| Fully compliant                    | √ |
| Substantially compliant            |   |
| Partially compliant                |   |
| Non-compliant                      |   |



## **Panel Recommendations**

- Enhance the international visibility of the Department through peer-reviewed publications in English and other international languages
- Reflect on the teaching and workload of the staff members at the Department
- Explore all possibilities of mobility and make it administratively feasible
- Organize from time to time team-building activities to enhance collegiality among staff members and among staff members and 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**

AP was guided through lecture halls, conference rooms, staff offices, the IT room, the three laboratories, and the Library. AP also visited the church of the Faculty, which acts as a space of learning liturgical practices of the Orthodox Church.

In the light of the site visit, AP is satisfied with the basic facilities of the Department. Rooms, offices, and laboratories which are in the service of the Department are functional. The Department makes use of two classrooms and two amphitheatres, well-equipped with learning tools and recently renovated. The Secretariat is open to the public and students on a daily basis, and a substantial portion of its work is processed electronically. Library is in good condition and furnished with sufficient material for teaching and research. Yet, due to lack of financial resources received from the University, a very poor number of new acquisitions is yearly added to the Library's book resources. There is a plethora of resources available digitally to the students and teaching staff (subscriptions to TLG, Jstor, etc.). The electronic catalogue of the library is generally helpful. It was clear to AP that the staff and the students of the Department in general feel relatively supported in their research by electronic resources.

Every October the Department welcomes first-year students organizing a special event. On this occasion, students are informed of the Department's facilities and resources, the ways they can be supported in case they face any kind of difficulties.

AP is generally satisfied with the infrastructure and research resources of the Department.

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

- Increase funding resources of the School's Library
- Increase the online resources with regard to academic journals and publications

## **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 Department makes full use of the information management tools developed by the University to support the operation of the Faculties/Schools and the implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System. Utilizing these tools and systems, the School reliably monitors the data of students and the teaching staff, the structure, and organization of courses and the general services it offers to students, teachers, and employees. The information collected is then used to continuously improve the overall operation of the Department.

Data regarding the Department's teaching and research staff is stored in a physical archive kept at the School's Secretariat and European Programmes Office. The same data is uploaded on the MODIP Quality Management System, the staff's pages on the School's website, on the course e-inventory, and the Institutional Repository of Scientific Papers (IKEE). Data concerning the Undergraduate Programme is uploaded on the Department's website, the MODIP Quality Management System and the e-Study Guide, the e-learning platform, the open courses platform, the classroom schedule e-management, the e-Secretariat, and the reports of the online assessment of the students.

All information collected from the physical archive and the electronic systems mentioned above is used to compile reports and determine indicators concerning staff and students, as well as the educational, research, and operational processes of the Department, enabling their long-term monitoring and evaluation, with the ultimate goal of continuously improving the quality of the offered teaching and research work, as well as the curriculum.

For the quantitative assessment of the Department's performance both the data and indicators established by HAHE in the relevant instructions and forms as well as the indicators of quality that have been developed by the University in the context of its strategic planning are taken into consideration.

In this context, MODIP provides the School with statistical analyses, reports and diagrams, which are then used by the Administration, the OMEA, and the Department's Studies Committee in order to make decisions, and evaluate and review strategies and objectives. The main points on which the analysis of the available information focuses are the quality of the School's educational work, the staff's research activities, the compliance of the courses to the demands of the Study Programme and its strategic goals, the profile and performance of the students as well as their progress.

The Department takes into serious consideration the results of the electronic evaluation of the courses and staff by the students. Admittedly, the statistics drawn from the MODIP system reflect the low participation of the students in this process. This is because participation is estimated on the basis of all registered students of the Department (the so-called 'stagnate', i.e. not active students included) and it, therefore, does not reflect the participation percentage of the active students of the Department. MODIP currently discusses ways to solve this problem. Finally, it should also be noted that the participation percentage of the Department's students has significantly raised in recent years reaching the level of about 25-30% of the student population of the Department.

## Panel Judgement

| <b>Principle 7: Information Management</b> |   |
|--|---|
| Fully compliant                            | √ |
| Substantially compliant                    |   |
| Partially compliant                        |   |
| Non-compliant                              |   |

## Panel Recommendations

None.

## **Principle 8: Public Information**

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

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

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

### **Study Programme Compliance**

The Department uses the following channels to provide information about its Study Programme and Staff, its facilities and events: the Department's website, the University's website, the websites of the School's laboratories and research centre, and the Department's blog.

The Department maintains a new, user-friendly, comprehensive, and regularly updated website. The structure of the website is comprehensive and the information provided is both in Greek and English. Special care has been taken to the easy and open access to all information related to the teaching and research staff of the Department (e.g. research work and publications, CVs, contact information, courses they offer, etc), to the accessibility of all services provided by the Department and the University (e.g. e-secretariat, the EUDOXOS system for the free distribution of student handbooks, University facilities and services, etc). The Department has appointed a committee consisting of teaching and technical staff members to fulfil these objectives. Moreover, on the Department's blog, information about past or upcoming events is uploaded. The Department is also in the process of connecting its website to social media and creating a social media site for its alumni.

Moreover, the Department participates in various open house events of the University and organizes various events to inform secondary school students and the general public about its Study Programme. Information regarding the Department's programmes, research, and activities is provided to the public through mass media.

Finally, the Department has established two special committees whose mission is the dissemination of information about the Department to a wider audience, young people, in particular, an Outreach Committee and a Secondary Education Liaison Committee.

## Panel Judgement

| <b>Principle 8: Public Information</b> |   |
|--|---|
| Fully compliant                        | √ |
| Substantially compliant                |   |
| Partially compliant                    |   |
| Non-compliant                          |   |

## Panel Recommendations

- Set up a liaison network among alumni to be informed about the Department's activities, possibilities of employment, and participation in the social, cultural, and intellectual events of the Department
- Expand the use of English on the Department's website, particularly Programmes of Studies, CVs of the academic staff members.



**Principle 9: On-going Monitoring and Periodic Internal Review of Programmes**  
**INSTITUTIONS SHOULD HAVE IN PLACE AN INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM FOR THE AUDIT AND ANNUAL INTERNAL REVIEW OF THEIR PROGRAMMES, SO AS TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVES SET FOR THEM, THROUGH MONITORING AND AMENDMENTS, WITH A VIEW TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT. ANY ACTIONS TAKEN IN THE ABOVE CONTEXT SHOULD BE COMMUNICATED TO ALL PARTIES CONCERNED.**

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

*The above comprise the evaluation of:*

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

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

### **Study Programme Compliance**

The Department has established self-assessment practices which are in line with the general policy of the University and which aim at the continuous improvement of its Study Programme. The procedure, which is undertaken on a yearly basis, is coordinated by OMEA and involves the Council of the Department and its divisions as robust pillars of the decision-making process. Apart from the overall self-assessment carried out by OMEA, students' evaluation, statistical data and Erasmus+ mobility records are taken into serious account. Apparently, such a process has borne its fruits in the recent years since the Department introduced significant changes into its Study Programme and, along with that, decided to be rebranded. It is significant that this Programme now includes courses that reflect developments in those research areas which Orthodox Theology has recently nurtured great interest.

AP regards this flexibility to introduce changes into the Programme as very positive and takes it to be the result of the teaching staff's awareness of the importance and usefulness of the internal and external evaluations.

## Panel Judgement

| <b>Principle 9: On-going Monitoring and Periodic Internal Review of Programmes</b> |   |
|--|---|
| Fully compliant  | √ |
| Substantially compliant  |   |
| Partially compliant  |   |
| Non-compliant  |   |

## Panel Recommendations

- Continue operating in a fashion that gives value to the results of self-assessment and intra-departmental discussion
- Adopt robust procedures for the implementation of the recommendations
- Embark stakeholders and social partners in the process of self-evaluation

## **Principle 10: Regular External Evaluation of Undergraduate Programmes**

**PROGRAMMES SHOULD REGULARLY UNDERGO EVALUATION BY COMMITTEES OF EXTERNAL EXPERTS SET BY HAHE, AIMING AT ACCREDITATION. 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**

Its first external evaluation in 2013 seems to have generated a spirit of change and innovation for the Department. Suggestions and recommendations made by the 2013 Panel have been taken into serious account. Whenever feasible, the Department has committed itself to comply with them and implement them to its Study Programme, the methods of teaching and learning, the organization of its services, etc. However, since a decade has gone by, some of the recommendations cannot currently stand at least as they were formulated at that time. The suggestion to reduce the number of students admitted to the Department has now been materialized with the introduction of the minimum grade average for the admission to a University Department in Greece. Methods of virtual learning have now been adopted due to the evolution of technology and of the electronic means of communication. Other requirements still remain desiderata, for instance the establishment of a network with the Department's alumni or the reinforcement of bonds with external stakeholders and social partners. Yet, the efforts made by the Department in this direction over the past years must be fully acknowledged and commended.

## Panel Judgement

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

## Panel Recommendations

Further explore the potential of virtual learning by means of which inactive students could be encouraged and motivated to follow lectures and consequently make progress in their studies

## **PART C: CONCLUSIONS**

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

- Interdisciplinarity with regard to the range and scholarly orientation of the courses offered in the Study Programme
- Motivation of students and active engagement in theological reasoning and the needs of contemporary society
- Conscience and conscientiousness of the academic staff to adapt the Study Programme to contemporary culture and concerns of modern society
- Conscience and conscientiousness of the academic staff to the advantages gained by internal and external evaluation
- Collaboration of the Department with institutions of the Orthodox Church, research centres, and organizations of social care
- Servicing to other Departments outside the Faculty

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

- A high number of inactive students
- Low number of students taking advantage of Erasmus mobility
- Low number of elective courses
- Lack of financial resources of research for the benefit of the academic staff

### **III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions**

- Establish stronger ties with the Department of Theology
- Increase the number of elective courses that students can take from the Department of Theology
- Promote the teaching of Ancient Greek and biblical and patristic terminology in anticipation to specialized courses
- Offer support to and encourage students to benefit from the Erasmus+ programme
- Motivate the academic staff members to publish in peer-reviewed and internationally renowned journals
- Explore concrete ways how to implement virtual learning and integrate it into the good teaching practices

#### IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: **1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10**

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **4.**

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 |   |
| Partially compliant     |   |
| Non-compliant           |   |

## The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

**Name and Surname**

**Signature**

- 1. Professor Stephanos Efthymiadis (Chair)**  
Open University of Cyprus, Cyprus
- 2. Professor Rev. Ján Zozulák**  
Constantine the Philosopher University in Nitra, Slovakia
- 3. Professor Predrag Dragutinović**  
University of Belgrade, Serbia
- 4. Professor Rev. Emmanuel Agius**  
University of Malta, Malta
- 5. Mr Spartakos Tanasidis**  
University of Ioannina, Greece