



**ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ**  
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



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**Accreditation Report**  
**for the New Undergraduate Study Programme in operation**  
**of:**

**Early Childhood Education and Care**

**Institution: University of West Attica**

**Date: 12 November 2022**



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 New Undergraduate Study Programme in operation of **Early  
Childhood Education and Care** of the **University of West Attica** 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. New Undergraduate Study Programme in operation Profile.....	7
<b>Part B: Compliance with the Principles</b> .....	<b>9</b>
Principle 1: Strategic Planning, Feasibility and Sustainability of the Academic Unit.....	9
Principle 2: Quality Assurance Policy of the Institution and the Academic Unit.....	19
Principle 3: Design, Approval and Monitoring of the Quality of the New Undergraduate Programmes	22
Principle 4: Student-centred Approach in Learning, Teaching and Assessment of Students.....	26
Principle 5: Student Admission, Progression, Recognition of Academic Qualifications and Award of Degrees and Certificates of Competence of the New Study Programmes.....	29
Principle 6: Ensuring the Competence and High Quality of the Teaching Staff of the New Undergraduate Study Programmes .....	32
Principle 8: Collection, Analysis and Use of Information for the Organisation and Operation of New Undergraduate Programmes .....	40
Principle 9: Public Information Concerning the New Undergraduate Programmes .....	43
Principle 10: Periodic Internal Review of the New Study Programmes.....	45
Principle 11: Regular External Evaluation and Accreditation of the New Undergraduate Programmes.....	47
Principle 12: Monitoring the Transition from Previous Undergraduate Study Programmes to the New Ones.....	49
<b>Part C: Conclusions</b> .....	<b>52</b>
I. Features of Good Practice .....	52
II. Areas of Weakness .....	52
III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions .....	52
IV. Summary & Overall Assessment .....	54

## **PART A: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW**

### **I. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel**

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the new undergraduate study programme in operation of **Early Childhood Education and Care** of the **University of West Attica** comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

- 1. Prof. Leonidas Kyriakides (Chair)**  
University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus
- 2. Prof. Emer. Eleni Katsarou**  
University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL, USA
- 3. Prof. Emer. Athanasios Gagatsis**  
University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus
- 4. Assoc. Prof. Emer. Gina Ioannitou – Valavanidou**  
Le Mans Université, Le Mans, France
- 5. Mrs Evanthia Rizopoulou, Student**  
School of Early Childhood Education, Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki, Thessaloniki, Greece

## II. Review Procedure and Documentation

The accreditation of the new undergraduate study programme in operation of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) of the University of West Attica (UWA) was conducted fully in a remote mode, using the Zoom teleconferencing tool. The Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (HAHE) provided the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel (EEAP) members with a packet of materials ahead of the review process that included the Standards for Quality Accreditation, Mapping Grid and Assessment Guide, Assurance Policy Document, Quality Assurance Data, the European Qualifications Framework, as well as a wealth of other supportive material. **The Department** further provided the EEAP the Department's Accreditation Proposal and a Table of Contents for easy access to the files of each principle/standard, as well as additional supportive material including PowerPoint Presentations for each principle. The panel was also provided with HAHE's accreditation guidelines and was invited to attend an orientation session before the accreditation visit. The EEAP met as a group before the accreditation teleconferences to plan, coordinate division of work and process to be followed, and discuss issues that emerged from the preliminary study of the material at that point.

The virtual accreditation visit extended over two days, starting on November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2022. We first met with Prof. Efstathia Papageorgiou, Vice Rector/President of MODIP and Prof. Konstantinos Petrogiannis, Head of the Department for an overview of the Undergraduate Programme. We then met with OMEA and MODIP representatives to discuss the degree of compliance of the programme to the Quality Standards for Accreditation. A detailed presentation of the information and supporting material under each one of the twelve principles of the *“Standards for Quality Accreditation of New Undergraduate Programmes in Operation”* was provided. This day was concluded with debriefing meetings with EEAP members only. On the second day of our visit (November 8<sup>th</sup>, 2022), we first met with the teaching staff members and discussed about professional development opportunities, mobility, workload, and student evaluations. We then met with current students at different points in their degrees. Afterwards, we were given an on-line tour of the classrooms, lecture halls, libraries laboratories, and other facilities. Next, we met with employers and social partners to discuss the relations of the Department with external stakeholders from the private and the public sector. A debriefing meeting with EEAP members was later followed to discuss the outcomes of the on-line review and begin drafting the oral report. At the end of the meeting, we met with OMEA and MODIP representatives to discuss on several points/findings which may have needed further clarification. To conclude, an informal presentation of the EEAP key findings was also carried out to the Rector, Vice-Rector, Head of the Department, OMEA & MODIP members, and MODIP staff members.

From the very beginning, the Department welcomed us with warmth, collegiality and openness and they were all eager to answer our questions and address our concerns. Their presentations were informative, emphasizing the UWA's commitment to quality improvement in teaching, research and community outreach. A good number of faculty attended our meetings, a sign of involvement in departmental affairs. From our interactions and conversations with representatives of the Department, leadership, faculty members and administrative staff, current students, as well as community partners, we recognized that the Department takes its commitment to quality assurance seriously and are constantly working towards more compliance to the HAHE quality standards.

In closing, the EEAP would like to note the challenges of conducting an accreditation virtually. Despite the flawless and truly exemplary organization of the virtual visit on the part of our hosts, the EEAP members would like to point out that even though all the presentations were carried out effectively by the Department, the time allocated (i.e., only two days) for the virtual accreditation visit was not enough and a suggestion can be made to HAHE to follow the previous model where three days were allocated for the accreditation visit.

### III. New Undergraduate Study Programme in operation Profile

The Department belongs to the School of Administrative, Economic & Social Sciences, of the UWA and operates as a University Department since 2018 (Law 4521, Official Gazette 38/2.3.2018). The educational field to which the Department falls, based on the directive of UNESCO (2013) is *0112 Training for pre-school teachers, Early childhood educational development levels and early childhood teaching*. In this context, its main objectives are the education of teachers for the preschool age (theories, methods, and pedagogical and teaching practice for children of this age group), the development and acquisition of knowledge in education sciences and the provision of necessary knowledge to the students ensuring their proper training for their academic and professional career and development, as well as the study and research in the wider field of educational sciences.

The Department is housed in building 10 of the Campus of Alsus Aigaleo, while it has professors' offices in two others neighbouring buildings. The Alsos Egaleo Campus has modern facilities for the implementation of the study program, as well as five laboratories. The Department has the infrastructure for the implementation of the curriculum, which however need to be expanded to provide more space for the courses and laboratories.

The Department accepts the largest number of students among the three university departments that offer the same program in Greece. The two other universities are the International University of Greece and the University of Ioannina. More specifically, currently there are 873 students enrolled in the program (from which 190 are 1<sup>st</sup> year students), a number that make the Department one of the top five departments among the 26 departments of the UWA in terms of the admission basis and 3<sup>rd</sup> in a row in a national scale, among the 12 departments in the wider field of pre-school education.

The Department has staff members with multidisciplinary, as this is reflected in the four circles of courses, which represent scientific fields that they properly prepare the future teacher to cope with the special demands of modern multicultural educational and social environments: (a) Pedagogy, (b) Psychology, (c) Sociology of Education / Administration and Economics of Education, and (d) Aesthetic Education & Culture. It is noted that the Department has only been operating for three full academic years as a university academic Department and therefore is in the phase of continuous academic staffing (e.g., succeeding from 4 members of teaching staff in 2017 to reach 16 members in 2022). In addition, the Department is staffed by cooperating members such as special teaching staff members and researchers that have recently completed their PhD studies teachers.

The course of study extends to eight semesters (or four years) and to obtain the degree, 240 ECTS are required, which correspond to 45 courses (43 if the student chooses a thesis) and the Internship. Of those 45 courses, students must take 31 Compulsory courses and 14 Elective courses (or 12 if the thesis is chosen). All the courses offered at the study programme are 97, including the Internship and the Graduate Thesis. The main language of instruction is Greek. Course attendance is optional, except for laboratories.

It is worth mentioning that strong emphasis on Research and Methodology courses is given from the 1<sup>st</sup> semester of the studies, aiming to strengthen the scientific profile of the graduates (courses offered: 1. Research Methodology, 2. Systematic Observation of Infants and Toddlers, 3. Evaluation of Pedagogical Practice, 4. Research and Pedagogical Practice in Early Childhood, 5. Applied Statistics, 6. Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), 7. Science Paper Writing Tutorial, 8. Thesis).

The EEAP has found that the aims and work already done in the Department, allowed the structure of the program to be adhering to national and international similar programmes. It is also commendable that the faculty members are vigilant in ensuring high quality instruction and innovative approaches to teaching and learning. The programme is very well articulated and there is a definite identity of the programme as to what constitutes a good beginning teaching practitioner and future scholar/researcher. The promotion of research is central and a very important identity of what the programme faculty aspire for their graduates. The curriculum is monitored and evaluated very methodically both within the Department and program faculty, as well as within the MODIP and OMEA committees.



## **PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES**

### **Principle 1: Strategic Planning, Feasibility and Sustainability of the Academic Unit**

**Institutions must have developed an appropriate strategy for the establishment and operation of new academic units and the provision of new undergraduate study programmes. This strategy should be documented by specific feasibility and sustainability studies.**

*By decision of the institutional Senate, the Institutions should address in their strategy issues related to their academic structure in academic units and study programmes, which support the profile, the vision, the mission, and the strategic goal setting of the Institution, within a specific time frame. The strategy of the Institution should articulate the potential benefits, weaknesses, opportunities or risks from the operation of new academic units and study programmes, and plan all the necessary actions towards the achievement of their goals.*

*The strategy of their academic structure should be documented by specific feasibility and sustainability studies, especially for new academic units and new study programmes.*

*More specifically, the feasibility study of the new undergraduate study programmes should be accompanied by a four-year business plan to meet specific needs in infrastructure, services, human resources, procedures, financial resources, and management systems.*

*During the evaluation of the Institutions and their individual academic units in terms of meeting the criteria for the organisation of undergraduate study programmes, particular attention must be placed upon:*

***a. The academic profile and the mission of the academic unit***

*The profile and mission of the Department should be specified. The scientific field of the Department should be included in the internationally established scientific fields of Higher Education, as they are designated by the international categorisation of scientific fields in education, by UNESCO (ISCED 2013).*

***b. The strategy of the Institution for its academic development***

*The academic development strategy for the operation of the Department and the new study programme should be set out. This strategy should result from the investigation of the factors that influence the studies and the research in the scientific field, the investigation of the institutional, economic, developmental, and social parameters that apply in the external environment of the Institution, as well as the possibilities and capabilities that exist within the internal environment (as reflected in a SWOT Analysis: strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats). This specific analysis should demonstrate the reason for selecting the scientific field of the new department.*

***c. The documentation of the feasibility of the operation of the Department and the study programme***

*The feasibility of the operation of the new Department should be justified based on:*

- *the needs of the national and regional economy (economic sectors, employment, supply-demand, expected academic and professional qualifications)*

- *comparison with other national and international study programmes of the same scientific field*
- *the state-of-the-art developments*
- *the existing academic map; the differentiation of the proposed Department from the already existing ones needs to be analysed, in addition to the implications of the current image of the academic map in the specific scientific field.*

**d. The documentation of the sustainability of the new department**

*Mention must be made to the infrastructure, human resources, funding perspective, services, and all other available resources in terms of:*

- *educational and research facilities (buildings, rooms, laboratories, equipment, etc.)*
- *staff (existing and new, by category, specialty, rank and laboratory). A distinct five-year plan is required, documenting the commitment of the School and of the Institution for filling in the necessary faculty positions to cover at least the entire pre-defined core curriculum*
- *funding (funding possibility from public or non-public sources)*
- *services (central, departmental / student support, digital, administrative, etc.)*

**e. The structure of studies**

*The structure of the studies should be briefly presented, namely:*

- **The organisation of studies:** *The courses and the categories to which they belong; the distribution of the courses into semesters; the alignment of the courses with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).*
- **Learning process:** *Documentation must be provided as to how the student-centered approach is ensured (modes of teaching and evaluation of students beyond the traditional methods).*
- **Learning outcomes:** *Knowledge, skills and competences acquired by graduates, as well as the professional rights awarded must be mentioned.*

**f. The number of admitted students**

- *The proposed number of admitted students over a five-year period should be specified.*
- *Any similar departments in other HEIs with the possibility of student transfers from / to the proposed Department should be mentioned.*

**g. Postgraduate studies and research**

- *It is necessary to indicate research priorities in the scientific field, the opportunities for interdisciplinary research, the challenges towards new knowledge, possible research collaborations, etc.*
- *In addition, the postgraduate and doctoral programmes offered by the academic unit, the research projects performed, and the research performance of the faculty members should be mentioned.*

**Relevant documentation**

- *Introductory Report by the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) addressing the above points with the necessary documentation*

- *Updated Strategic Plan of the Institution that will include its proposed academic reconstruction, in view of the planned operation of new department(s) (incl. updated SWOT analysis at institutional level)*
- *Feasibility and sustainability studies for the establishment and operation of the new academic unit and the new study programme*
- *Four-year business plan*

## **Study Programme Compliance**

### **a) The academic profile and the mission of the academic unit**

*Findings:* The EEAP was provided with an exceptional articulation of the academic profile and mission of the Program, as detailed in the documents and the remote presentations.

*Analysis of Judgment:* In accordance with international and UNESCO (ISCED 2013) specifications of early childhood, intensive examination of similar programs within Greece and beyond, it has become evident that the faculty members afford their students with a balanced program of studies that equips them with the necessary theoretical and practical understandings and professional standards. As this is a highly specialized teaching domain, the program faculty have a clear focus and command of the necessary scientific and practical trends that are evident in the four (4) cycles of content areas or scientific strands that represent the critical demands for future early childhood teachers and care providers. Therefore, these four strands aim to support future educators with all the requirements and skills necessary in multicultural educational and social environments.

*Conclusions:* As the Program is fully compliant in this sub-principle, no recommendations are made.

### **b) The strategy of the Institution for its academic development**

*Findings:* The Program was designed in 2018, reconstructed in 2021, but also rooted in the deep sixty-year tradition of its predecessor, that of a TEI program of early childhood education.

*Analysis of Judgment:* In all the documentation and especially as articulated in B4, as well as in presentations and interviews conducted by the EEAP, it has become evident that the strategy of this institution for academic development is multifaceted and critically examined. Program faculty and program committees delved into the analysis of local and international undergraduate programs in early childhood education. As a result, what is evident is that what has been developed is a dynamic, evolving, scientific, and research-based approach in making critical decisions and programmatic manifestations of current social, cultural, and linguistic challenges facing education, especially in the crucial early preschool years. Additionally, pertinent committees and faculty members have submitted a strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis. Strengths identified include the high degree of correlation with other well regarded international Programs, a sharp focus on student learning by applying student-centred approaches and teaching practical placement(s) (heretofore, TPP) in cooperating ECEC centres that aim to deepen and advance students' theoretical knowledge and understanding. Opportunities perceived include the potential for coalescing faculty to

create stronger research units, increased collaboration with other universities and Erasmus scholarships, and the development of collaborations with local administration units (Topiki Autodioikisi) on all matters as to further strengthen the TPP component as well as the work of the research workshops/teams. The threats noted were significant and include the increased degree of dependence on the state, on critical programmatic matters such as faculty hiring and retention, overall funding concerns, all of which have inevitable effects on the instructional and research outcomes of the entire program.

*Conclusions:* The strategic plan that has been developed is detailed across three main goals namely, the continuous upgrade of the educational processes, the development of the program faculty and new hires, and the reinforcement of notions and subsequent actions of outreach, openness, and globalization. The EEAP considers this ambitious plan very worthwhile, but also essential for the academic development of this new program. The aims that are attached to each goal appear manageable, and if anything, might have a year-by-year aim with higher percentages of improvement than those cited. The Program is fully compliant in this part of their report.

### **c) The documentation of the feasibility of the operation of the Department and the study programme**

*Findings:* The Program has developed a feasibility study that identified the local needs for its existence, and its structure parallels with existing national and international programs. The study is articulated accounting for four major domains that include the economic needs at the local and national level, the evolution of scientific/research-based, state of the art programs as reflected in Programs of international renown and attending to the extant academic map in Programs. Specifically, and by engaging the constant comparative method, faculty committees examined Programs of excellence and hence remain convinced their Program can provide its graduates with all the necessary knowledge and professional standards to excel in any setting, whether at a post graduate program or at a local or international centre for the care of children in their earliest years. Additionally, within the program parameters, students receive deep educational knowledge that include digital skills and pedagogical expertise that appear to meet and exceed the standards of other local and international Programs of study. A well-known approach to sound pedagogy, is that students are immersed in ways of teaching and learning within their program and serve as a model for their own future teaching/research endeavours. The Program boasts a student-centred program, with ample opportunities for students to design and self-select their study among a fair number of courses, integrating theoretical courses with attached workshops, thus embellishing, and enhancing the reflective approach to teaching and learning and the theory-to-practice model. Regarding the long-term feasibility plan, the program has identified three areas to be considered: the research that takes place within the research workshops and by individual faculty members; the post-graduate, doctoral and post-doctoral programs within the program; and the research plan of each DEP, EDIP, and YD member of the faculty. Currently the program does not offer its own a post-graduate program that is specific and focuses on ECEC guidelines and standards. Nonetheless, a committee has been drawn to examine various recommendations for such an autonomous post-graduate program.

*Analysis of Judgment:* As articulated in B4, the Program hosts the largest number of undergraduate students, 873 active students during the 2021-22 academic year, as compared with the other three (3) similar programs. It is also among the top five programs of the UWA, when comparing the entry requirements of the last three years, and it is number three (3) in the same metric when compared with the other two major Programs, the Kapodistrian University of Athens (EKPA) and the Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki (APoTh). More importantly, the program of studies being offered to students with the intent in ECEC education, reflects not only all the international standards of early/pre-school pedagogy, but based on the number of graduates that enter the profession, contributes significantly to families, working parents, and the community writ large. Indeed, the numbers and the contributions to society are quite evident, thus ensuring the high degree of feasibility of the program.

*Conclusions:* The EEAP finds the feasibility plan of the program substantially compliant and thus, has the following recommendations. First, while it is impressive that the program admits a large number of students, in the long term, it may be more feasible to distinguish the program of studies from the other competing and highly regarded programs, most notably those from the Kapodistrian University of Athens (EKPA) and the Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki (APoTh), by slightly altering a) the focus and specialization, and b) the approach and length of the TPP component. Specifically, given the recent and ongoing presence of children and their families from ethnolinguistic and social class groups in the public domain, it may be advisable to hone in on providing graduates with a specialization in multicultural and special education in ECEC. In the same vein, the possibility of providing students with more intentionally selected sites that are *community centres* and host *ethnolinguistic* and from *high needs social class parents/families*. This provision may prove to be more advantageous professionally and programmatically. Finally, a time-intensive TPP in the final year of study, perhaps with two 2-month internships across both semesters of the fourth year, may be a distinguishing characteristic and, one that students have expressed in this committee's interviews, as more desirable than the current TPP timetable. In both recommendations above and were these to be considered, faculty hires would have to also be re-envisioned and fulfilled appropriately.

#### **d) The documentation of the sustainability of the new department**

*Findings:* The Program has developed a sustainability plan that identifies the state and other external funding, the available support structures/facilities, and all the personnel to provide the academic program for its continued operation. Funding of this program as with most education programs, is provided by the state and as such, the program has identified four external areas of possible support that include ESPA research programs, bi-departmental post-graduate programs. The paucity of such external funding in the ECEC domain is sited as an issue to be considered. The available facilities, two classrooms with 90 people capacity, labs for the workshops as well as the secretarial and faculty offices, are in short supply. The best technologically equipped classrooms are currently shared with other departments. Currently, the faculty/staff breakdown by rank or responsibility is as follows: 16 DEP members 5 of whom are full professors, 1 associate, 6 assistant, 4 lecturers; 2 EDIP members that serve as

Workshop Teaching Staff; 1 ETEP member who serves as a Special Technology Teaching Staff. Additionally, there are currently 12 university fellows and 9 academic fellows; 18 doctoral students; 2 post-doctoral fellows. Support and advising facilities and opportunities are varied and critical for the well-being of the students and include, sports and arts programs, an e-learning platform and electronic records, updates, announcements of the program, a streamlined web page in both Greek and English, a student advisor, and a secretarial system that has excellent knowledge of the program and provides support to the students.

*Analysis of Judgment:* The EEAP finds this aspect of the sustainability plan well thought out, merits a substantially compliant rating, for the following reasons. In its 5-year sustainability plan in terms of faculty and staff hires, while the EEAP committee appreciates the systemic issue of the centralized and sclerotic approach to new hires, and as these may or may not pertain to faculty needs and content knowledge/expertise gaps within the newly articulated program, it remains inconceivable to make programmatic decisions with little advance knowledge of new hires. It appears that high need areas of concentration are often covered in the program by adjunct faculty, a perennial problem in universities the world over.

*Conclusions:* Every effort needs to be made to maintain high quality teaching and learning environments, especially in the component of TPP observations and on-site teaching. It may be advisable to create a new strand or faculty specialization that is wholly “clinical” in nature. Undergraduate and graduate programs in other countries (and especially in USA), have made these highly specialized hires, a top priority. As it currently stands, the faculty member to student ratio is exceedingly high (62 to 1), especially given the nature of TPP supervision and attached teaching component. The EAAP finds that serious admission/retention rethinking is perhaps needed, even at the expense of admitting a smaller number of students to the program.

#### **e) The structure of studies**

*Findings: The Program* in its design has the following key characteristics: Students graduate with 240 ECTS units, that are derived from 45 courses, 43 courses if students select to conduct a diploma paper/*ptyhiaki ergasia*. The program has four major strands from which the courses are drawn namely, Pedagogy, Psychology, Sociology/Administration/Economics in Education, and Aesthetic/Art Education and Culture. In total, students spend nearly 85% of their time in the program in theoretical courses and 15% in practice teaching and workshop related courses. There are 31 mandatory courses, including that of the TPP; 63 elective-mandatory courses; and 3 elective courses. The total hours in theoretical courses amount to 132, and workshop related courses amount to 25 hours. Much care and support has been designed to ensure that students become familiar with all the necessary aspects of the program studies, by hosting seminars, such as for newly admitted students, Erasmus opportunities, and the planning of TPP in the final year. As mentioned earlier in this report, this is a highly specialized teaching domain, and as such, the program faculty have set a clear focus and command of the necessary scientific and practical trends that are evident in the four (4) cycles of content areas and scientific strands that represent the critical demands for future early childhood teachers and care providers. These four content areas or strands of study aim to support future educators with all the requirements necessary in multicultural educational and social environments. As

articulated in B1 and B20 of the documentation provided, coursework attendance is not mandatory, except for the workshops. The number of ECTS for the TPP component is 20 (of 240) and it is mandatory, to be conducted either in the 7<sup>th</sup> or the 8<sup>th</sup> semester. TPP takes place in pre-selected ECEC sites, four (4) days a week, approximately 8 hours per day for two (2) months. The grading scale for coursework is on a scale of 1-10, the breakdown being, “excellent” is 8.5-10; “very good” is 6.5-8.49; “good” is 5-6.49; “unsatisfactory” is 0-4.99.

*Analysis of Judgment:* In all the courses examined, the central aim of the faculty as reflected in presentations and documentation, is to provide students with an intentional mix of methods and models of teaching, focusing sharply on student-centered and innovative approaches as well as theory- to-practice actions and events. Faculty members in our interviews discussed at length the ways in which they engage students in courses and in the field/TPP so that they have the critical thinking required, the reflection that is necessary, as well the development of “on the spot” analysis around key areas of study and theoretical underpinnings, as they work in various ECEC placements. In doing so, professional skills, growth potential and pedagogical understandings can be ensured.

*Conclusions:* It is very clear that the Department’s faculty and administration both as a team and within special committees, have thoughtfully designed a program of studies for the ECEC education of their students, that is both commensurate with many excellent programs in Greece and beyond, as well as drawing from its own excellent TEI predecessor and partnering institutions for the crucial TPP component. And while the rating for the structure of the program studies is substantially compliant, this is primarily due to the TPP component and the evaluation/supervision of students. Therefore, the main recommendation is what has been mentioned in earlier in this report namely, the rethinking of how to make the TPP component more beneficial for the students. Making the TPP broader in terms of time commitment is advisable. The supervision of the students in the field/ECEC sites needs to be tightened and far more intentional in terms of an agreed upon observation/supervision “protocols” that will better serve all concerned: the students, the university supervisor, and the attending mentor teacher. Additionally, it has become clear to this EEAP committee that even though there is a grading scale for the program coursework, what appears to be elusive is how many “good” or any sub-par grades are allowed for a student to a) conduct their TPP component, and b) graduate so that program faculty will have the confidence needed that s/he will become an excellent *beginning* ECEC educator.

#### **f) The number of admitted students**

*Findings:* Academic Year 2020-2021 was the first year that the Department, under its redesigned program from the pre-existing TEI program, admitted students. Currently, the program hosts the largest number of undergraduate students, 873 active students during the 2021-22 academic year, as compared with the other three (3) similar programs within Greece. It is also among the top five programs of the West Attica University, when comparing the entry requirements of the last three years, and it is number three (3) in the same metric when compared with the other two major Programs, the Kapodistrian University of Athens (EKPA) and the Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki (APoTh). Of the students admitted, nearly 35% claim that TAFPPI was their first choice among similar programs in the country.

*Analysis of Judgment:* From the pre-existing TEI program, 63 students were transferred into the Program. Documents examined and interviews conducted show that on average, each year approximately 165 students are admitted, approaching 887 students for the four-year program. Currently, approximately 625 students appear to be on par in graduating in four (4) years, while the rest will graduate in 4.5 years. On a scale of 1-10 as outlined earlier in this report, the average grade received upon completion of the program, is 7.9. The student to faculty ratio is currently 1 to 60 but aims this ratio to be 1 to 25.

*Conclusions:* The EEAP committee rates this sub-article as fully compliant. Nonetheless and as articulated in sub-part (c) of this report vis a vis the feasibility of the program and while it is admirable that a new program attracts this great a number of students, it is quite possible that this number of admitted students per year needs to be re-examined. It may be more advantageous to develop a specialization that distinguishes the program from its national competitors. Inevitably, such a specialization will depend heavily on the new faculty hires for the program to reflect these changes, as well as exploring new TPP sites.

#### **g) Postgraduate studies**

*Findings:* An autonomous post-graduate program is currently being reviewed by a special committee that was drawn to explicitly address how to best articulate and enact such a study program.

*Analysis of Judgment:* Based on a review of faculty strengths and content areas within ECEC, such a program seems poised to remain focused on the scientific pedagogy and psychological well-being of children in the early years. Currently, there is an inter-departmental post-graduate program that is available, the Pedagogy via Innovative Technologies and Biomedical Approaches” that is co-sponsored with the Department of Biomedical Sciences of the UWA. Doctoral studies are being conducted by 18 students, and there are 2 post-doctoral studies that are conducted in coordination with the Université Paris Ouest Nanterre La Défense. Additionally, a proposal for co-supervision of doctoral theses has been submitted to the College of Education, Texas State University, U.S.A.

*Conclusions:* The EEAP finds the post-graduate inter-departmental program in place as well as the plan to provide an autonomous post-graduate program warranted given the current faculty configuration and future hires within ECEC specialized fields. Therefore, this merits a fully compliant rating, and as such makes no further recommendations.



## Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 1: Strategic planning, feasibility and sustainability of the academic unit</b>	
<b>a. The academic profile and the mission of the academic unit</b>	
Fully compliant	V
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
<b>b. The strategy of the Institution for its academic development</b>	
Fully compliant	V
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
<b>c. The documentation of the feasibility of the operation of the Department and the study programme</b>	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	V
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
<b>d. The documentation of the sustainability of the new department</b>	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	V
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
<b>e. The structure of studies</b>	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	V
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
<b>f. The number of admitted students</b>	
Fully compliant	V
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
<b>g. Postgraduate studies</b>	
Fully compliant	V
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

<b>Principle 1: Strategic planning, feasibility and sustainability of the academic unit (overall)</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>V</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### **Panel Recommendations**

- Distinguish the program of studies from the other competing and highly regarded programs, most notably those from the Kapodistrian University of Athens (EKPA) and the Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki (APoTh), by slightly altering a) the focus and specialization, and b) the approach and length of the TPP component.
- Providing students with more intentionally selected sites that are *community centres* and host *ethnolinguistic* and from *high needs social class parents/families*.
- Providing a time-intensive TPP in the final year of study (e.g., with two 2-month internships across both semesters of the fourth year).
- The supervision of the students in the field/ECEC sites needs to be strengthened upon observation/supervision “protocols” that will better serve all concerned: the students, the university supervisor, and the attending mentor teacher.

## Principle 2: Quality Assurance Policy of the Institution and the Academic Unit

The Institution should have in place an accredited Internal Quality Assurance System, and should formulate and apply a Quality Assurance Policy, which is part of its strategy, specialises in the operation of the new academic units and the new study programmes, and is accompanied by annual quality assurance goals for the continuous development and improvement of the academic units and the study programmes.

*The quality assurance policy of the Institution must be formulated in the form of a published statement, which is implemented by all stakeholders. It focuses on the achievement of special annual quality goals related to the quality assurance of the new study programme offered by the academic unit. In order to implement this policy, the Institution, among others, commits itself to put into practice quality procedures that will demonstrate: the adequacy and quality of the academic unit's resources; the suitability of the structure and organisation of the curriculum; the appropriateness of the qualifications of the teaching staff; the quality of support services of the academic unit and its staffing with appropriate administrative personnel. The Institution also commits itself to conduct an annual internal evaluation of the new undergraduate programme (UGP), realised by the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG) in collaboration with the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) of the Institution.*

*The quality assurance policy of the academic unit includes its commitment to implement quality procedures that will demonstrate: a) the adequacy of the structure and organisation of the curriculum, b) the pursuit of learning outcomes and qualifications in accordance with the European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education, c) the promotion of the quality and effectiveness of the teaching work, d) the adequacy of the qualifications of the teaching staff, e) the promotion of the quality and quantity of the research work of the members of the academic unit, f) the ways of linking teaching with research, g) the level of demand for graduates' qualifications in the labour market, h) the quality of support services, such as administration, libraries and student care, i) the implementation of an annual review and audit of the quality assurance system of the UGP through the cooperation of the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG) with the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) of the Institution.*

### **Relevant documentation**

- Revised Quality Assurance Policy of the Institution
- Quality Assurance Policy of the academic unit
- Quality target setting of the Institution and the academic unit (utilising the S.M.A.R.T. methodology)

### **Study Programme Compliance**

#### **Findings**

The Program's quality assurance procedures are monitored by the UWA's Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP). In general, the Quality Assurance Policy aims to support the academic content and scientific orientation of the undergraduate program, in accordance with international

academic standards and the current national legislation. To that extent, there is a policy in place for improving the educational experience of undergraduate students, the quality and quantity of the overall research output of the Department, as well as the introduction of innovative teaching and practical training approaches and strategies. Furthermore, such policy extends to the continual monitoring and improvement of human resources, curricula, outreach, mobility, and program visibility.

The Program has set six (6) key goals as to the quality assurance that can be summarized as follows: i) excellence in pedagogy; ii) promotion of research; iii) openness and globalization efforts; iv) insisting on sustainability and transparency; v) improvement of the academic environment and the technological infrastructure and reconstruction; vi) the social imperative of improving the quality of the work in society at large as realized by students/graduates of the program.

As presented in the Program's documents B6-B9, the main dimensions of the Department's quality assurance policy revolve around:

- The design, development, and implementation of curricula through a transparent and inclusive process that engenders and promotes quality and meets scientific and ECEC professional skills and demands.
- Fostering self-reflection and self-evaluation of the program faculty; ongoing approach of student evaluations of both students and graduates of the program.
- The recruitment and retention of highly qualified faculty and evaluate their work yearly; support and encourage the production of research work by members of the Department that meets high academic standards; both the quality and quantity of faculty research/scholarly output; encourage and support faculty in attending scholarly activities such as conferences, research networks and grant projects.
- Connection between teaching and research and development of initiatives that disseminate research findings at all levels of ECEC settings; enhance and support the TPP sites by promoting innovative teaching approaches, seeking feedback from the practicing teachers to understand the how student/graduates fare in their teaching and professional skills.
- Ongoing evaluation and improvement by revisiting the Quality Assurance system in place building on the fruitful collaboration between OMEA and MODIP.

### **Analysis of Judgment**

Overall, the EEAP finds the quality assurance action plan of the Department fully compliant. It is evident that the quality assurance processes are coordinated and supervised by OMEA in collaboration with the MODIP of the institution, and feedback is being obtained on a continual basis from the program's relevant committees, the Department meetings, and the analysis of student evaluation reports. For the process to be commendable, it may be advisable to engage important stakeholders to ensure that the quality of the action plan is more relevant, robust, and far-reaching. Current students may need to have representation both in the MODIP and the OMEA meetings, as well provide feedback on their course of study and readiness for the

TPP opportunities and overall abilities and skills. Program alumni and ECEC teachers and administrators, especially those in the partnering/mentoring sites, have certainly voiced a great appreciation/ collaboration and support for their work, but this is an opportunity to legitimate the stakeholders’ voices in more significant ways, such as providing them with opportunities to off programmatic improvements.

**Conclusions**

In addition to the OMEA and MODIP, be intentional and transparent (both in terms of policies and their implementation) in engaging alumni, practicing ECEC teachers/mentors and involving them in meaningful ways in curricular design.

**Panel Judgement**

<b>Principle 2: Quality assurance policy of the Institution and the academic unit</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>V</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

**Panel Recommendations**

As mentioned above, the EEAP recommends that the Program, in addition to the OMEA and MODIP, be intentional and transparent (both in terms of policies and their implementation) in engaging alumni, practicing ECEC teachers/mentors and involving them in meaningful ways in curricular design.

### **Principle 3: Design, Approval and Monitoring of the Quality of the New Undergraduate Programmes**

Institutions should design the new 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.

*The Institutions develop their new undergraduate study programmes, following a well-defined procedure. The academic profile, the identity 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 European and National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education are described at this stage. An important new element in the structure of the programmes is the introduction of courses for the acquisition of digital skills. The above components should be taken into consideration and constitute the subject of the programme design, which, among other things, should include: elements of the Institution's strategy, labour market data and employment prospects of graduates, smooth progression of students throughout the stages of the programme, the anticipated student workload according to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), the option of providing work experience to the students, the linking of teaching and research, the international experience in study programmes of similar disciplines, the relevant regulatory framework, and the official procedure for the approval of the programme by the Institution.*

*The procedure of approval or revision of the programmes provides for the verification of compliance with the basic requirements of the Standards by the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU).*

#### **Relevant documentation**

- *Senate decision for the establishment of the UGP*
- *Curriculum structure: courses, course categories (including courses for the acquisition of digital skills), ECTS awarded, expected learning outcomes according to the EQF, internship, mobility opportunities.*
- *Labour market data regarding the employment of graduates, international experience in a related scientific field.*
- *Student Guide*
- *Course outlines*
- *Teaching staff (list of areas of specialisation, its relation to the courses taught, employment relationship)*
- *QAU minutes for the internal evaluation of the new study programme and its compliance with the Standards*

## **Study Programme Compliance**

### **Findings**

The new 4-year Program was developed based on the current ideas and discoveries of the scientific inquiry and, more specifically, as they are designated by the international categorization of scientific fields in education, by UNESCO, for the “training for pre-school teachers, early childhood educational development levels and early childhood teaching”. The program has also been developed based on the teaching staffs’ specializations, on the 60-year experience of the Department, on the programs of other departments in Greece with elements brought forward from other universities abroad, mainly those in Europe. As such, the structure of the program is sound and complete in terms of courses (compulsory and electives).

To obtain the degree, 240 credit units (ECTS) are required, which correspond to 45 courses, including the internship. Of the forty-three (43) or forty-five (45) courses (depending on whether the elaboration of a dissertation has been selected), thirty-one (31) are compulsory courses and the remaining twelve/fourteen (12/14) are elective courses. There are also optional courses, dedicated to the acquisition of digital skills, which offer broader knowledge, but are not included in the degree grade. They are listed in the Diploma Supplement.

The courses are organized into four scientific fields: Pedagogy; Psychology; Sociology/Management/Economics of Education; and Aesthetic Education and Culture. The teaching staff’s research expertise are in relation to the courses taught. There is also an elective course that the Panel finds highly important, the First Aid Topics for Early Childhood. There is a clear progress, in the courses from the first through the last term, from basic and mandatory courses to a higher degree of individualisation and specialisation. Compulsory courses are taught in the first four semesters. In the last two semesters, apart from the Internship, which is compulsory, there are no compulsory courses. The Thesis of the Department is optional.

The program was developed by faculty members and approved by the appropriate University committees. There is a procedure in place for periodic revisions of the curriculum which involves consultation with students, and less with stakeholders and external experts.

The objectives, the expected learning outcomes, and the intended professional qualifications have been included in the program design, whereas the details of the program structure along with the course outlines and information about the teaching staff have been published in the Student Guide, as required.

### **Analysis of judgement**

Pedagogy, psychology, and competence in early childhood teaching - all relevant to opportunities in the job market, are integral parts of the Programme. The EEAP members believe that this is an overall sound program fulfilling the credit (ECTS) requirements for the Diploma of ECEC Undergraduate Programme. Consideration could be given to transforming certain compulsory courses to elective, and the reverse, to assist the progress of students through the academic semesters without sacrificing the quality of the program. The EEAP feels

the Department could consider changing the elective course “First Aid Topics for Early Childhood” to mandatory or to be included in the workshops/laboratories that take place on campus or in kindergartens during the internship.

### **Conclusions**

The EEAP was impressed by the quality of the academic program, the enthusiasm with which the faculty regard their work, vision and mission of the program studies, their overall dedication, and the high calibre of the teaching faculty and staff. Current students, graduates of the program, as well as community partners and stakeholders agree as to the quality and high regard they hold of the program. Nonetheless, the EEAP finds this article to be substantially compliant for the following reasons.

First, and as it is articulated fully in sub-article (1e), the more desirable and universally accepted approach to the TPP component, is a more substantial and better supervised TPP component. Therefore, this relatively early stage of the new program may be the best opportunity to restructure the fourth year so students are afforded more than one semester in TPP sites; to establish a more frequent observation/supervision schedule; and ambitious as it may be, to design an observation protocol that could be used by the mentoring teachers, the university supervisors, and the students. It may also be beneficial expand the workshops/laboratories during the early semesters/internships. It is important to point out, that some of the recommendations above, especially regarding the TPP time commitment, were clearly voiced by students, some faculty members, and community partners.

Second, we encourage the program faculty to consider enriching three themes in the mission of the program that have become important in most international programs of teacher education: *Multilingual/Multicultural Education, Critical Pedagogy, and Language Learning*. These themes could be stand-alone courses in the early semesters to prepare students to teach the increasingly sociocultural and linguistically diverse population in Greek early childhood centres and schools. Additionally, the same themes could be weaved across disciplines and courses in the later semesters the students’ course of study. Clearly, such changes require highly specialized faculty, but such a programmatic decision will also distinguish this program in the future from other similar/competing programs in Greece.

### **Panel Judgement**

<b>Principle 3: Design, approval and monitoring of the quality of the new undergraduate programmes</b>	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	<b>V</b>
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	



## Panel Recommendations

- Transform certain compulsory courses to elective, and the reverse such as the elective course of the First Aid Topics for Early Childhood, could be offered as compulsory or be included in the workshops/laboratories during the internship.
- Re-imagine/restructure the fourth year so students are afforded more than one semester in TPP sites; establish a more frequent observation/supervision schedule; design an observation protocol that could be used by the mentoring teachers, the university supervisors, and the students.
- Consider enriching three themes in the mission of the program that have become important in most international programs of teacher education: *Multilingual/Multicultural Education, Critical Pedagogy, and Language Learning.*

## **Principle 4: Student-centred Approach in Learning, Teaching and Assessment of Students**

The academic unit should ensure that the new 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.

*In the implementation of student-centered learning and teaching, the academic unit:*

- ✓ *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 application of 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*

### **Relevant documentation**

- *Questionnaires for assessment by the students*
- *Regulation for dealing with students' complaints and appeals*
- *Regulation for the function of the academic advisor*
- *Reference to the planned teaching modes and assessment methods*

### **Study Programme Compliance**

#### **Findings**

There is clear evidence that student-centred learning, teaching, and assessment is one of the priorities of the Department. The students are strongly encouraged to be active partners in their learning through choices of courses that reflect their interests. There are also events that the Department organizes that enhance the development of students' critical ability, their autonomy and collaborative skills, such as educational visits to places of informal learning (e.g., museums, concert halls, theatrical performances). The Department's actions are also various and diverse; cooperation with local government & other bodies; special events; conferences – workshops; visits; participation in public bodies; public interventions. The EEAP found very interesting the participation of the students of the Department in the global art initiative that takes place twice a year “La Grande Lessive”, in which teams from 100 and more countries have participated so far.

The teaching faculty and staff use a variety of modes of delivery of the material - through lab sessions (workshops and theory), small group projects, and electronically (Electronic Platforms

for Asynchronous Teaching - e-class). Faculty conduct lectures, and sometimes from visiting professors from local and foreign universities (ERASMUS programme), or other specialists. When asked about the quality of instruction and the commitment of the teaching staff to their learning, the interviewed students' responses were very positive.

The assessment methods and evaluations vary including formal ways (e.g., final and midterm exams, individual and group projects), but also tools of authentic assessment (such as the e-portfolio and the educator's diary). Grade components and assessment methods are published in advance and are available in the course syllabi. If a student fails a course more than three times, s/he may be examined upon application by a three-member committee consisting of members of the staff. It is also impressive how effectively the faculty adapted their courses and evaluations methods for online teaching during the pandemic.

The student evaluations are a major part of the quality monitoring procedure. Students can assess the effectiveness of teaching via course evaluation surveys conducted during the 8th to 11th week of each semester for each course separately. On average, the Department teaching faculty and staff are rated as highly effective.

There is a formal procedure in place to address situations where students want to contest a grade or file a complaint: by completing the Electronic Complaint Submission Form available on the Department's Website, or by submitting a written complaint. The resolution of the issue can be achieved with the contribution of a member of the Department, the Academic Advisor, the President or even the assembly of the Department.

The faculty of the Department, along with a consulting committee, assist students with special learning difficulties, or other health issues and/or disabilities, by providing them, among other things, with alternative methods of evaluation. The teaching areas of the Department are accessible to people with disabilities, as mentioned in the Department's presentation.

### **Analysis of judgment**

The Department's leadership and faculty have delivered a student-centred program of study. The course objectives and activities are also consistent with a student-centred approach. Students are given opportunities and support to develop personal as well as academic skills.

The educational process is evaluated through questionnaires completed each academic semester. By comparing progress over time, these questionnaires provide significant data that contribute to the improvement of the offered courses. There are rules and regulations that outline the role and responsibilities of the academic tutor.

### **Conclusion**

The EEAP found that the **undergraduate program in the UWA** is substantially student-centred and cultivates and promotes mutual respect between the students and the faculty and staff. Some small adjustments which are needed for continuous improvement can be easily applied and are to be expected in new academic programs. As an example, the teaching staff offers

the same course two or three times to different groups of students because there is no classroom that can accommodate all at the same time. When the planned move to a new building, as the chair informed us, will be completed this issue should be taken care of. The Department respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, and considers and uses different modes of delivery, where appropriate. Consequently, the Department is fully compliant with this principle.

### Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 4: Student-centred approach in learning, teaching and assessment of students</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>V</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### Panel Recommendations

None.

## **Principle 5: Student Admission, Progression, Recognition of Academic Qualifications and Award of Degrees and Certificates of Competence of the New Study Programmes**

**Academic units should develop and apply published regulations addressing all aspects and phases of studies of the programme (admission, progression, recognition and degree award).**

*All the issues from the beginning to the end of studies should be governed by the internal regulations of the academic units. Indicatively:*

- ✓ *the registration procedure of the admitted students and the necessary documents - according to the law - and the support of the newly admitted students*
- ✓ *student rights and obligations, and monitoring of student progression*
- ✓ *internship issues, granting of scholarships*
- ✓ *the procedures and terms for writing the thesis (diploma or degree)*
- ✓ *the procedure of award and recognition of degrees, the duration of studies, the conditions for progression and assurance of the progress of students in their studies*

*as well as*

- ✓ *the terms and conditions for enhancing student mobility*

*Appropriate recognition procedures rely on relevant academic practice for recognition of credits among various European academic departments and Institutions in line with the principles of the Lisbon Convention on the Recognition of Qualifications concerning Higher Education in the European Region. 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).*

*All the above must be made public within the context of the Student Guide.*

### **Relevant documentation**

- *Internal regulation for the operation of the new study programme*
- *Regulation of studies, internship, mobility and student assignments*
- *Printed Diploma Supplement*

*Certificate from the President of the academic unit that the diploma supplement is awarded to all graduates without exception together with the degree or the certificate of completion of studies*

## **Study Programme Compliance**

### **Findings**

The Program has developed, published, and effectively applied regulations that pertain to all aspects of students' admission, progression, recognition, and degree/certification award. The Department provides an orientation day for all new students each year. The students are provided with information relating to their studies, academic life, the UWA, department, facilities, and the surrounding community. The program study guide includes detailed information about the goals and structure of the program.

The program follows the ECTS credit system which is applied across the curriculum and supports students' later recognition and certification, as well as facilitates their possible mobility.

Student mobility is encouraged via the ERASMUS program, although the number of participating students from this Program to date is small; 21 outgoing students, 3 faculty visits abroad, 4 faculty visits from abroad, from 2019 until today. The prerequisites for the mobility of the students for the Erasmus+ program, are described in the relevant regulation (Mobility Regulation) and the website of the Department. The Program has concluded Erasmus agreements with universities in England, Hungary, Portugal, and Turkey. It was suggested, during discussions with students, that Erasmus agreement should be signed also with the Scandinavian countries as they are among the leading innovators in this field.

The internship is a compulsory course and can be selected in either one of the last two semesters. It is a valuable part of the programme, in developing job-specific and broader skills for the students. It has a duration of two months. There are workshops/laboratories that take place on campus or in kindergartens during the internship. Student attendance in these laboratories is mandatory.

Students carry out their internships in private and public educational and care structures (nurseries and kindergartens), in NGOs (accommodation structures for unaccompanied children), in closed-type institutions (e.g., Infant Center "The Mother"), and so on. Students can carry out their internships not only in Attica but, if they wish, also in structures throughout the country, such as Cyprus and other countries through ERASMUS.

The Thesis is optional. The Department has defined a set of quality requirements for the implementation of the thesis. The Panel read several theses and found the quality of research high. The process of assigning, supervising, and evaluating the theses and the internships, as well as their quality standards, are mentioned in the programme which is posted on the ECEC's website.

### **Analysis of judgement**

The Program has a well-established process for students to register and matriculate through the study program. During the discussions, it was noted that the level of student attendance of lectures is often low. The EEAP addressed this with students who offered a few possible causes for that. One reason provided was the high quality of class notes prepared by the faculty

and the availability of information electronically, such as lecture material on the internet. Additionally, the chair and the teaching staff informed us that insufficient availability of classrooms often constraints the lecture to take place late in the evening.

The EEAP has the view, supported by both students and staff members, that establishing a more frequent observation and contact with the students during the TPP component, as well as expanding the workshops/laboratories during the internship, would be of great benefit. The EEAP believes that consideration should be given to hiring additional specialized faculty/staff in order to do accomplish this.

The EEAP also suggests that involving in the new students' Erasmus orientation day students, who have attended Erasmus programs and/or are working abroad, would be beneficial.

### **Conclusions**

The EEAP finds that the Program has developed, published, and is fully committed to managing, administering, and applying all regulations that pertain to all aspects of students' admission, progression, recognition, and degree/certification award. The chair, teaching staff, and administrative staff have worked tirelessly and effectively during a difficult transition period and are to be commended for bringing this new program forward in an exceptional manner. The Panel finds the Department in full compliance with this Principle.

### **Panel Judgement**

<b>Principle 5: Student admission, progression, recognition of academic qualifications, and award of degrees and certificates of competence of the new study programmes</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>V</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### **Panel Recommendations**

- As elaborated in the (1e) and in principle 4 recommendations, it may be prudent to re-construct/re-imagine the nature of the TPP component and the workshops/laboratories that take place during the earlier internships. The EEAP understands that this will require additional resources and that approval rests with the Ministry of Education.
- Encourage students to take advantage of the ERASMUS or other relevant programs. Establish more Erasmus agreements with universities and childcare providers.

## **Principle 6: Ensuring the Competence and High Quality of the Teaching Staff of the New Undergraduate Study Programmes**

**Institutions should assure themselves of the competence, the level of knowledge and skills of the teaching staff of the academic units, and apply fair and transparent processes for their recruitment, training and further development.**

*The Institution should attend to the adequacy of the teaching staff of the academic unit, the appropriate staff-student ratio, the suitable categories of staff, the appropriate subject areas and specialisations, the fair and objective recruitment process, the high research performance, the training – development, the staff development policy (including participation in mobility schemes, conferences and educational leaves- as mandated by law).*

*More specifically, 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.*

### **Relevant documentation**

- *Procedures and criteria for teaching staff recruitment*
- *Regulations or employment contracts, and obligations of the teaching staff*
- *Policy for staff recruitment, support and development*
- *Performance of the teaching staff in scientific-research and teaching work, also based on internationally recognised systems of scientific evaluation (e.g., Google Scholar, Scopus, etc.)*

### **Study Programme Compliance**

#### **Findings**

The EEAP examined the Department's website (<http://ecec.uniwa.gr/>) that contained important information about the teaching staff. Moreover, the Head of the Department, the Vice Rector of the UWA and different staff members have presented a variety of information concerning the scientific criteria and the selection procedures of faculty, the regulations or contracts of employment, the laboratories and the obligations of the teaching and laboratory staff and the support and staff development policy and the performance of teaching staff in scientific and teaching work, based on internationally recognized systems of evaluation of scientists (e.g. Google Scholar, Scopus, etc.). The Department has created 3 research laboratories:



a) the “Laboratory for Research on Early Childhood Psychology”, which was founded in 2019 (<https://ecec.uniwa.gr/ergastirio-psychopaidagogikon-efarmogon-stin-proscholiki-agogi-epsepa/>).

(b) the “Laboratory of Psychological Development of Infants and Toddlers” which was founded in 2020 (<https://ecec.uniwa.gr/ergastirio-psychologikis-anaptyxis-vrefon-kai-nipion-epsavn/>).

c) the “Leadership and Innovation Laboratory ” which operates at the level of the School of Administrative, Economic & Social Sciences, but functionally belongs to the Department (<https://ecec.uniwa.gr/ergastirio-tis-scholis-dioikitikon-oikonomikon-koinonikon-epistimon-igesia-kainotomia>).

Finally, the UWA has developed a Center for Training and Lifelong Learning (Government Gazette-FEK 2880 / 19-07-2018) in the context of staff training (<https://www.uniwa.gr/spoydes/dia-vioy-mathisi/>).

The Department comprises sixteen (16) faculty members (DEP): five professors, one associate professor, six assistant professors, and four lectures.

Moreover 2 members of laboratory and teaching staff (EDIP) that perform Laboratory-Applied Teaching Work, a Key Role in the Effective and Orderly Operation of the Department and one special technical laboratory staff (ETEP) who offers specialized applied project services for the achievement of the research objectives of the Department and provides financial and technical and managerial support to the laboratories of the Department.

### **Analysis of Judgement**

Concerning the procedures and criteria for teaching staff recruitment, the Department follows the current legislation on the recruitment and promotion processes of faculty members. Specifically, all procedures of announcement, selection, promotion, and recruitment are posted on the information system APELLA. The details of these processes are accessible to candidates and members of the evaluation committee, ensuring transparency and securing a meritocratic result.

The faculty continue to develop academically, and several faculty members publish their research work in international scientific refereed journals. A significant number of monographs and edited volumes have been published during the last years. Moreover, faculty members organized and participated in national and international conferences bringing more visibility to the Department and their research work. As the Vice Rector of the UWA has presented to EEAP, faculty are encouraged to participate in international conferences with an adequate financial support for their participation. Additional funds are allocated by the UWA for the publication of the staff research in international open access scientific journals. In addition, the Department encourages the mobility of faculty members by establishing agreements with domestic and foreign institutions for research and teaching purposes.

Finally, it is important to note that in order to meet the Department’s curricular and administrative needs at the undergraduate level, faculty constantly carry a teaching and administrative overload.

## **Conclusions**

Although **the UWA** has been in operation for a few years (Law 4521/2018), excellent actions have been taken in the Department to ensure quality in teaching and research. The staff members have excellent relations with one another and have established strong collaborations amongst them. Nevertheless, working conditions are not ideal due to the lack of financial resources and especially due to the high workload. Faculty members spend (on an average) more than 6 hours per week on teaching and many hours per week on administrative duties. Since a significant percentage of their time is spent on conducting research, the EEAP encourages the Department to identify ways to reduce the teaching and administrative load of faculty members.

## **Panel Judgement**

<b>Principle 6: Ensuring the competence and high quality of the teaching staff of the new undergraduate study programmes</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>V</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

## **Panel Recommendations**

- The EEAP believes that the Department should consider alternative ways to increase the faculty's international scientific collaborations and research activity.
- The Department should consider identifying and keeping track of administrative work that could be carried out by the administrative staff to alleviate faculty overload and to free time for faculty members to engage in scholarship.
- The Department should try to establish a fair balance in the academic ranking ratio between female and male professors.
- Although the performance of the teaching staff in scientific/research is satisfactory, EEAP believes that the research must principally be based on internationally recognised systems of scientific evaluation (web of Science, Scopus, etc.)

- The EEAP recommends future faculty hires to explore areas of expertise able to address the evolving demographic data in infant care facilities/ early childhood centers. In all levels of learning and childcare in Greece, there is a shift in demographics with the influx of immigrant and refugee families and students. A suggestion would be to identify faculty, possibly both current and new hires, with expertise and willingness to promote numerous areas that include, bilingualism/biliteracy; second language development as manifested in the program curriculum and in the TPP sites; pedagogy for special/high need populations. Such a critical area of expertise would reflect not only a moral imperative given the national and international trends in population mobility but would create a specialization that would distinguish this program from its major competitor

## **Principle 7: Learning Resources and Student Support of the New Undergraduate Programmes**

Institutions should have adequate funding to meet the needs for the operation of the academic unit and the new study programme as well as the means to cover all their 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 resources, on a planned and long-term basis, to support learning and academic activity in general, in order to offer students the best possible level of studies. The above means include facilities such as, the necessary general and specific libraries and possibilities for access to electronic databases, study rooms, educational and scientific equipment, information and communication services, support and 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 students, students with disabilities), in addition to 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. Students should be informed about all available services. In delivering support services, the role of support and administration staff is crucial and therefore this segment of staff needs to be qualified and have opportunities to develop its competences.*

### **Relevant documentation**

- Detailed description of the infrastructure and services made available by the Institution to the academic unit to support learning and academic activity (human resources, infrastructure, services, etc.) and the corresponding specific commitment of the Institution to financially cover these infrastructure-services from state or other resources
- Administrative support staff of the new undergraduate programme (job descriptions, qualifications and responsibilities)
- Informative / promotional material given to students with reference to the available services

### **Study Programme Compliance**

#### **Findings**

Although the EEAP members were not able to inspect in person the facilities of the Department, a video tour was given of the building, five Laboratories, lecture and conference halls, library, and administrative offices.

The Department is housed in building 10 of the Campus of Alsus Aigaleo, while it has professors' offices in two others neighbouring buildings. The Alsos Egaleo Campus has modern facilities for the implementation of the study program, as well as five laboratories. The Department has 2 lecture rooms, with a capacity of 90 seats. These rooms, as well as the three

laboratories for teaching special courses, are equipped with the necessary technical equipment and cable connection. However, the needs of the new **Study Program** are not covered by the specific rooms and therefore, the Department grants additional rooms from other Departments. A small number of courses are held the 2nd Campus which is in the area of Archaïou Elaïona (Egaleo district). There is also one office for the Secretary of the Department, 10 areas for academic staff offices and access, together with other departments of the School, to infrastructures for teaching laboratory courses that require the use of computers.

The classrooms of the Department are equipped with computers, projectors, and cable connection, as well as with the relevant software required for teaching the courses. All teaching areas of the Department are accessible to people with disabilities, since the K10 building is on the ground floor, while in the K16 building, where the two large halls of the Department are located, there are elevators for the convenience and easy access of all students. All the terminals in the rooms are connected to the network of the UWA for access to the Internet and the Library, providing at the same time the possibility for students to access international as well as Greek databases. The network is connected to GUNET (Greek University Network).

The Department has also three educational laboratory rooms with full equipment and infrastructure for teaching laboratory courses and two research laboratory rooms:

1. Infant Education Laboratory
2. Music and Movement Education Laboratory
3. Aesthetic Education Laboratory
4. Laboratory of Psychopedagogical Applications in Preschool Education
5. Laboratory for the Psychological Development of Babies & Toddlers

The Department uses both the UWA's asynchronous e-learning systems (Moodle, e-class) and the MS Teams modern distance learning platform, which are used for the posting, organization, and asynchronous distribution of the educational material as well as for the asynchronous communication between teachers and students. The MS Teams application (<https://teams.microsoft.com/>) is used to create synchronous and video lectures.

The students of the Department have also access to the three Libraries of the UWA as well as to all Study and Computer rooms on the three Campuses of the UWA (Campus of Alsus Aigaleo, Campus of Archaïou Elaïona, Campus of Athens).

Students are informed about the services provided through a dynamic list of sharing messages with all active students as recipients, through the website of the Department, through the Study Guide, as well as through oral and electronic communication. Systematic update is provided to first-year students at the welcome meeting which takes place at the beginning of each academic year.

### **Analysis of judgement**

There is a range of support services available to students such as electronic assistance in their program choices, electronic and telephone advising with faculty advisors and secretarial staff. At the beginning of each academic year, first year students are provided with the sufficient support and counselling sessions that seem to be most useful in terms of planning and supporting new students for the entirety of their academic careers. There seems to be adequate student support both in terms of assistance and access, and in terms of career

orientation. A strength of the program is the existence of the three learning/teaching/research laboratories mentioned above.

Students describe the faculty as hard working, inspirational, and motivated to teach and very responsive to students' needs. In addition, students find the teaching environment at the Department friendly and deeply respectful. Students reported learning a significant amount by just attending the classes and felt very well prepared for work within the country or to continue their studies in other universities abroad. During our interviews with students, it became also clear that students would be interested in the following adjustment to advising and networking. More deliberate across-the-years in the program advising/sharing sessions, so that students can communicate and receive advice and information from older and more experienced students. In addition, since graduates from the previous program work abroad, the faculty could explore the possibilities of engaging graduates in the process of student support and develop a network between these students to discuss about their career prospects.

The Department constantly strives for the rational and effective utilization of the resources that provides for its students. Nonetheless, there are some deficiencies, such as the insufficient number of faculty members in relation to the needs of the Department and the number of its active students (873 for 2021-22), as well as the inadequate building infrastructure such as the existing classroom and office space, that is simply not sufficient for meeting the needs of the Department.

### **Conclusions**

**The Department** has the infrastructure for the implementation of the study program. However, this needs to be expanded to provide more space for the courses and laboratories. For example, the 2 lecture rooms (with a capacity of 90 seats) are not enough to cover the Department's needs. All necessary facilities such as the necessary general and specific libraries and possibilities for access to electronic databases, study rooms, educational and scientific equipment, information and communication services, support, and counselling services, are present. Students are also informed about all the available services and continues support is provided to them by the administration staff as well as by their professors.

It would be very helpful for **the Department** to gain soon more areas of teaching as well as more offices for the academic staff members to meet its increasing needs (especially in terms of the number of students). The teaching areas need to be also enhanced with chairs/furniture that lend to small group activities/cooperative learning. Additionally, **the UWA** should try to enhance the subscriptions to electronic databases (by finding the necessary financial resources) to meet the research needs both of faculty members and the students. For example, the library of UWA should consider the use of Educational Research Abstracts Online (ERA) (Taylor & Francis) which is a comprehensive database, comprising of fully indexed abstracts that cover the current international research in education.

## Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 7: Learning resources and student support of the new undergraduate programmes</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>V</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

## Panel Recommendations

- Increasing the teaching areas as well as more the offices for the academic faculty/staff members for meeting the increasing needs of the Department. The teaching areas need to be also enhanced with chairs/furniture that lend to small group activities/cooperative learning.
- The Program and the UWA should try to enhance the subscriptions to electronic databases, to meet the research needs both of faculty members and the students. Specifically, the library of UWA should consider the use of Educational Research Abstracts Online (ERA).

## **Principle 8: Collection, Analysis and Use of Information for the Organisation and Operation of New Undergraduate Programmes**

The Institutions and their academic units 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.

*Effective procedures for collecting and analysing information on the operation of Institutions, academic units and study programmes feed data into the internal quality assurance system. The following data is of interest: key performance indicators for the student body profile, student progression, success and drop-out rates, student satisfaction with the programme, availability of learning resources and student support. The completion of the fields of National Information System for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (NISQA) should be correct and complete with the exception of the fields that concern graduates in which a null value is registered.*

### **Relevant documentation**

- *Report from the National Information System for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (NISQA) at the level of the Institution, the Department and the new UGP*
- *Operation of an information management system for the collection of administrative data for the implementation of the programme (Students' Record)*
- *Other tools and procedures designed to collect data on the academic and administrative functions of the academic unit and the study programme*

### **Study Programme Compliance**

#### **Findings**

The UWA applies collection, analysis and management procedures of information and data, concerning its educational, research and administrative work project, *through an integrated information system*, through its own *electronics tools*, but also through widespread *online tools* for collection of data. The data is collected based on the methodology and the tables proposed by HAHE, while the data collected are stored in the UWA' system. This of course enables the extraction of quality data as well as of administrative data in two ways: a) by MODIP staff members directly through the MODIP application, which functionally interfaces with some of the existing applications, and b) by the users of the corresponding applications after electronic or oral request of MODIP or OMEA staff members.

More specifically, the UWA provides a comprehensive range of online services to the academic community, supporting the educational process, research activity, as well as the administrative and support services of the UWA. All applications are accessible to the entire academic community using unique Institutional codes (username & password): <https://www.uniwa.gr/foitites/>.



These online services and other tools are the following:

1. An information system for the collection of administrative data regarding the study program (student log). This system is divided into:
  - a. Student Web/Student Management Application – “UniTron Student Log” (access to grades, exam timetables, certificates etc.)
  - b. Tutor/Faculty Web (Supervision of students per course, dividing students into monitoring groups, submission of scores on predetermined dates by the Department Secretariat etc.).
  - c. MODIP Web (Questionnaires, Statistics, Course/Teaching Evaluation etc.)
2. Student Evaluation Surveys carried out by the Department:
  - a. The Study Profile of First Year Students (from Oct. 2022)
  - b. Internship Evaluation Survey (ac. Years 2020-21 & 2021-2022)
  - c. Graduate Absorption Survey (in collaboration with the Department of Interconnection, Mediation & Innovation)
  - d. Research entitled "Investigation of the satisfaction of students regarding their program of study and future prospects of the graduates of the Department of UWA" (from Jan. 2022)
3. Utilization of the Department’s Moodle Online Classroom Management System: two Online Course Management Systems, the Open eClass and Moodle: Create and utilize valuable indicators related to the quality of the education provided such as attendance of courses and activity completion, with the aim of improving the student engagement index.

All members of the academic community participate in the collection of information and data about the operation of the Department. Specifically, students participate by completing closed-type questionnaires within the six-month period evaluation, which concern both their tutors and the educational process. Moreover, the teaching staff participates in the process by completing on a six-month basis both the individual surveys as well as course surveys

Lastly, it should be noted that for the continuous improvement of the study program, **the Department** proceeded in the establishment of an External Council (Committee) of academics and researchers who are specialists in the specific field of education, to interact with the Department and contribute to the upgrade of the quality of the study program.

### **Analysis of judgement**

The Department has a standard procedure for receiving data about the evaluation of the students, academic staff members, and educational work. However, the Department has no procedure to take into consideration the evaluations and opinions of other stakeholders, such as social partners and graduate students.

The Department follows the procedures and tools provided and indicated by the UWA, but has also managed to establish its own tools and surveys as these have been identified above. It is without doubt that the “Student log” system is an evolving information system, which interconnects data from both students and faculty members. The collected information is used to produce reports and indicators concerning staff and students, as well as the educational,

research and operational processes of the institution, allowing their monitoring and evaluation over time.

Based on the above data, an analysis is carried out by the Department on variables related to both course evaluation and other key indicators, such as participation in mobility and research programmes, publications of faculty members and the flow of student graduations.

### **Conclusions**

The EEAP members found that the Programt has established quality assurance procedures and collects, among other things, adequate data on students, teaching staff, organization, and curriculum structure. Furthermore, the Department has established procedures and collects data that allow examination of demographics, course evaluations, and student progression through the programme. It would be also helpful for the Department to establish a procedure of collecting systematic data from graduate students and social partners.

Lastly, it is very important that **the Department** has established its own external committee of advisors. It is strongly recommended to make a systematic use of this committee.

### **Panel Judgement**

<b>Principle 8: Collection, analysis and use of information for the organisation and operation of new undergraduate programmes</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>V</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### **Panel Recommendations**

- Take into consideration the evaluations and opinions of other stakeholders, such as social partners and graduate students to establish a clearer vision of the study program, closer to today's actual job market.
- Make a systematic use of the external committee of advisors that was established by the Program.

## **Principle 9: Public Information Concerning the New Undergraduate Programmes**

**Institutions and academic units should publish information about their teaching and academic activities in a direct and readily accessible way. The relevant information should be up-to-date, clear and objective.**

*Information on the Institutions' activities is useful for prospective and current students, graduates, other stakeholders and the public. Therefore, Institutions and their academic units must provide information about their activities, including the new undergraduate programmes they offer, the intended learning outcomes, the degrees awarded, the teaching, learning and assessment procedures used, the pass rates and the learning opportunities available to their students. Information is also provided, to the extent possible, on graduate employment perspectives.*

### **Relevant documentation**

- *Dedicated segment on the website of the Department for the promotion of the new study programme*
- *Bilingual version of the website of the academic unit with complete, clear and objective information*
- *Provision for website maintenance and updating*

### **Study Programme Compliance**

#### **Findings**

The UWA and the Program have put in place a comprehensive public information system. The determination above is based on reviews of printed and electronic sources, as well as interviews with the Head of the Department, members of the MODIP, OMEA, faculty, secretarial staff, and students. The EEAP examined materials that exhibited evidence of critical information sharing with students, faculty members, external partners, and the community at large. The Department's website in the Greek language contains information about its facilities, faculty members and staff, undergraduate, postgraduate, doctoral studies and guides, announcements, events, policy of quality assurance, and internal assessment reports. It also contains information about the Department's research projects and collaborations. News about awards, activities of members of the academic community (conferences, workshops, announcements, distinctions, trainings) are also posted on the Department's website. The information given is complete without being excessive or redundant. The important applications for students, such as the e-study, e-class, and the *Eudoxus* system, are visible on the first page. The website contains a separate Students' menu fully developed with all the e-services. Information of interest to the public, such as invited lectures, workshops, conferences and other events that connect the Department with society, is also posted on the website of the Department. All information is clearly laid out and detailed in an attractive and user-friendly format. There are *F.A.Q.* and *Search* buttons on the Menu as well as a complaint form. Pictures and graphics are true to what they describe. Generally, the website environment is fully functional.

The English version of the website is sufficiently enriched. The announcements button redirects to the <https://erasmus.uniwa.gr/en/category/announcements-en/> website and it contains information mainly about the Erasmus+ Programme. This is understandable but it will be useful if the English version is updated with the news about the Department more often, as this will improve the international visibility of the Department and the communication with alumni.

### **Analysis of judgment**

The committee discussed with staff, students, graduates, and stakeholders and thoroughly studied the functionality of the Department’s website. The analysis revealed that the Department places significant emphasis on public information and has made an exceptional effort to present itself to its students and to the public.

### **Conclusions**

In conclusion, the Program is fully compliant with this principle. The site is user-friendly and presents information about Departmental activities and academic structure.

### **Panel Judgement**

<b>Principle 9: Public information concerning the new undergraduate programmes</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>V</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### **Panel Recommendations**

- The EEAP encourages the Program to enrich even more fully the English version of their website by publishing important announcements and news more often.
- The EEAP encourages the Program to consider creating an e-Newsletter to maintain contact with students, alumni, schools, social partners and stakeholders.

## Principle 10: Periodic Internal Review of the New Study Programmes

Institutions and academic units should have in place an internal quality assurance system, for the audit and annual internal review of their new 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 the new study programmes aim at maintaining the level of educational provision and creating 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.*

### **Relevant documentation**

- *Procedure for the re-evaluation, redefinition and updating of the curriculum*
- *Procedure for mitigating weaknesses and upgrading the structure of the UGP and the learning process*
- *Feedback processes on strategy implementation and quality targeting of the new UGP and relevant decision-making processes (students, external stakeholders)*
- *Results of the annual internal evaluation of the study programme by the QAU and the relevant minutes*

### **Study Programme Compliance**

#### **Findings**

The internal evaluation of the program is conducted by MODIP, based on the Internal Quality Assurance System of the UWA, that received certification in December 2020 (UWA Internal Quality Assurance System Report, 23/2/2021). Based on this report, relevant interventions/adjustments are carried out, to achieve the identified goals of the study program. The evaluation of the Program is coordinated by the Department's Evaluation Working Group (OMEA), supervised by MODIP and carried out in accordance with the procedures defined by the HAHE.

The Program is regularly reviewed and revised with the participation of students and faculty members. Students mainly answer to questionnaires, and they may also participate in interviews and group discussions. The internal evaluation concludes with the writing of the internal evaluation report of the academic unit. The student questionnaire, mainly concern the quality and the means of research and teaching, the structure and content of studies, student

welfare and the infrastructure of the Program or the UWA. Faculty members fill in individual survey forms, which concern their teaching and scientific work.

### **Analysis of judgement**

During the virtual meetings with the faculty of the Program, it was apparent that they seem to take the results of their internal evaluation report quite seriously as evidenced not only by the changes they have been incorporating in their programme of study, stemming from such results, but also by their considerable enthusiasm in tracking the whole matter of internal assessment. Procedures for readjustment and modernization of the material of the study program are also established based on the results of the internal evaluation. It should be emphasized that the Program's action plan already includes attempts to remove the negative aspects and strengthen the positive points of the internal evaluation, with defined priorities that are based on the results of this evaluation and include, among others (a) the new reformed curriculum that was activated during the academic year 2021-2022 based on the expectations and needs of students for strengthening their pedagogical training and the development the graduates' professional skills, (b) The Pedagogy & Teaching Certificate Proficiency and, (c) The Certificate of Proficiency in Computer Knowledge and digital skills.

### **Conclusions**

The Program is regularly reviewed and revised with the participation of students and faculty members. The information collected is analysed and the program is modified according to the internal evaluation data. The student evaluations are a major part of the quality monitoring procedure. The relative high student participation ensures quality results and guarantees that student opinion is represented. It would be very helpful to share with the academic community the views of students on the improvement of the quality of teaching, the better organization of the courses, the cooperation with the teachers and their expectations from the studies.

### **Panel Judgement**

<b>Principle 10: Periodic internal review of the new study programmes</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>V</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### **Panel Recommendations**

None.

## **Principle 11: Regular External Evaluation and Accreditation of the New Undergraduate Programmes**

The new undergraduate study programmes should regularly undergo evaluation by panels of external experts set by HAHE, aiming at accreditation. The results of the external evaluation and accreditation are used for the continuous improvement of the Institutions, academic units and study programmes. 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 panel of independent experts. HAHE grants accreditation of programmes, based on the Reports submitted by the panels, 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 Standards, and as a catalyst for improvement, while opening new perspectives towards the international standing of the awarded degrees. Both academic units and institutions must consistently consider the conclusions and the recommendations submitted by the panels of experts for the continuous improvement of the programme.*

### **Relevant documentation**

- *Progress report on the results from the utilisation of the recommendations of the external evaluation of the Institution and of the IQAS Accreditation Report.*

### **Study Programme Compliance**

#### **Findings**

In order to investigate the program's compliance with the QA principles and the principles established by HAHE, the EEAP reviewed all available documents and the website of the Department (<http://ecec.uniwa.gr/>) and conducted extensive online interviews with the Vice-Rector for Academic and Student Affairs and President of MODIP, Professor Efstathia Papageorgiou, the Head of the Department, Professor Constantinos Petrogiannis, members of MODIP and the members of OMEA, the program's faculty, administrative staff, students, one graduate from the pre-existing Undergraduate Program and external stakeholders. The Head of the Department, the heads of the Laboratories and the teaching staff presented and explained their vision and were willing to share with the EEAP all the documents and information that could make their work visible. In particular, the Vice-Rector Professor Efstathia Papageorgiou presented the progress report prepared by the MODIP, on the results from the use of the recommendations of the external evaluation of the Undergraduate Program of Study of the Department and the accreditation report of the committee (see document B26). The whole report includes five sections: the first section is related to the commitment of the UWA to comply with the recommendations of the EEAP, the second concerns the study of the accreditation report, the third is related to the preparation of an

action plan, the fourth concerns the monitoring of actions and the fifth is the monitoring report of the Undergraduate Program of Study.

### **Analysis of Judgment**

The Program has made significant efforts to satisfy the recommendations of the report of the Undergraduate Program of Study. The faculty invest serious efforts in research and funded research projects, and they have tried to connect teaching and research and to improve research and publications. The creation of three research - oriented laboratories is also a very positive action towards the improvement of the faculty's research: the "Laboratory for Research on Early Childhood Psychology", which was founded in 2019; the "Laboratory of Psychological Development of Infants and Toddlers" which was founded in 2020 and the "Leadership and Innovation Laboratory. Moreover, the digitization of the Department's communication with students with regular and in time announcements through the website, was a very positive action of the Department.

### **Conclusions**

The EEAP confirms that the Program has carefully and respectfully responded to the findings and recommendations listed in the External Evaluation Report. The value of the external review process to the functioning of both the Department and the undergraduate program is evident in the careful, epistemologically sound, and systemic program review and the changes initiated by MODIP which were implemented by the Program.

### **Panel Judgement**

<b>Principle 11: Regular external evaluation and accreditation of the new undergraduate programmes</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>V</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### **Panel Recommendations**

*None.*



## **Principle 12: Monitoring the Transition from Previous Undergraduate Study Programmes to the New Ones**

**Institutions and academic units apply procedures for the transition from previously existing undergraduate study programmes to new ones, in order to ensure compliance with the requirements of the Standards.**

*Applies in cases where the Department implements, in addition to the new UGPs, any pre-existing UGPs from departments of former Technological Educational Institutions (TEI) or from departments that were merged / renamed / abolished.*

*Institutions should implement procedures for the transition from former UGPs to new ones, in order to ensure their compliance with the requirements of the Standards. More specifically, the institution and the academic unit must have a) the necessary learning resources, b) appropriate teaching staff, c) structured curriculum (courses, ECTS, learning outcomes), d) study regulations, award of diploma and diploma supplement, and e) system of data collection and use, with particular reference to the data of the graduates of the pre-existing UGP. In this context, the Institutions and the academic units prepare a plan for the foreseen transition period of the existing UGP until its completion, the costs caused to the Institution by its operation as well as possible measures and proposals for its smooth delivery and termination. This planning includes data on the transition and subsequent progression of students in the respective new UGP of the academic unit, as well as the specific graduation forecast for students enrolled under the previous status.*

### **Relevant documentation**

- *The planning of the Institution for the foreseen transition period, the operating costs and the specific measures or proposals for the smooth implementation and completion of the programme*
- *The study regulations, template for the degree and the diploma supplement*
- *Name list of teaching staff, status, subject and the course they teach / examine*
- *Report of Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) on the progress of the transition and the degree of completion of the programme. In the case of UGP of a former Technological Educational Institution (TEI), the report must include a specific reference to how the internship was implemented*

### **Study Programme Compliance**

#### **Findings**

The UWA despite its recent establishment (2018), originates from three historical and dynamic educational and research entities in the region of Attica: the Technological Educational Institute of Athens (TEI), the Piraeus University of Applied Sciences and the National School of Public Health. The Undergraduate Program of the UWA integrated the students and staff of the Department of Preschool Education the Technological Educational Institute (TEI) of Athens. The EEAP members studied the packet of materials available from three different sources: first was the material from HAHE, second was the material from the Department's website

[\(http://ecec.uniwa.gr/\)](http://ecec.uniwa.gr/) and the third was related to the very comprehensive presentations of the Vice-Rector of the UWA, the Head of the Department, and of various professors of the Program. These materials concern, among others, a Quality Assurance Policy document for the Undergraduate Program, the Undergraduate Student Guide, documentation on the legal framework, as well as a plethora of supportive materials and appendices concerning the relations of the past Department to the new one. Among the available material, there are the regulations of the study program, the template of the degree and the diploma supplement of the pre-existing Undergraduate Program (see documents B29A, B30A, B30B). Moreover, there is a list of the academic and teaching staff and their status, and the content area and the course they teach from the pre-existing Undergraduate program (document B31). Finally, the report of the MODIP reflects the process of the transition and the degree of completion of the Program. In the case of the former TEI program, the report should include a specific reference to how the traineeship is implemented (documents B32, B32-2, B32-3, B32-4, B32-5).

According to the available materials, the new students and those who, according to the legislation, were entitled to be included in the new Program, follow the 4-year university program and graduate with a university degree. The students who were currently studying in the program during the transition, were given the opportunity to choose whether to follow TEI /previous program of studies or the newly designed university program. Those who chose to continue in the university program, had an additional study load. Those who chose to complete their studies by obtaining a degree from the TEI program, or those who were not given the opportunity by law except to obtain a TEI degree, continued their studies maintaining their obligations according to the TEI program without further workload / studies.

### **Analysis of judgement**

The Program has the appropriate specialized teaching faculty and staff, that clearly, are committed in providing their students with sound and thoughtful learning and teaching experiences. Moreover, the UWA and the Program have prepared a plan for the transition period of the existing UGP until its completion by including data on the transition and subsequent progression of students in the respective new UGP of Department as well as the specific graduation forecast for students enrolled under the previous status. The EEAP believes that the undertaken measures by the UWA and the Department guarantee the smooth delivery and termination of the former UGP (TEI).

### **Conclusions**

It is quite evident, that the UWA and the Program have implemented all necessary procedures for the transition from the former UGPs (TEI) to the new one, to ensure their compliance with the requirements of the professional and academic standards.

## Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 12: Monitoring the transition from previous undergraduate study programmes to the new ones</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>V</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

## Panel Recommendations

None.

## PART C: CONCLUSIONS

### I. Features of Good Practice

- The Department has established a well-prepared plan for the transition period from the existing UGP to the university undergraduate program by including data on the transition and subsequent progression of students in the respective new undergraduate program of Department.
- The Department has established an External Advisory Council (Committee) of academics and researchers aiming to contribute to the upgrade of the quality of the study program.
- Additional funds are allocated by the UWA for the publication of papers of its academic staff members in international *open access* scientific journals.
- The Department organizes extra-curricular events (such as educational visits to places of non-formal learning: museums, concert halls, theatrical performances) for improving their students' critical ability, autonomy and collaborative skills.

### II. Areas of Weakness

- The monitoring mechanisms (including the assessment of students) during the internship need to be enhanced for gathering more reliable data on the student practice. The duration of the internship should be also re-considered (e.g., extending its duration during the 4<sup>th</sup> year of the study program).
- The infrastructure of the Department needs to be expanded to provide more space for the courses and laboratories (e.g., the 2 lecture rooms are not enough to cover the Department's needs), as well as more offices for the academic staff members. The teaching areas need to be also enhanced with furniture that enable cooperative learning.

### III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- Distinguish the program of studies from the other competing and highly regarded programs, most notably those from the Kapodistrian University of Athens (EKPA) and the Aristotelian University of Thessaloniki (APoTh), by slightly altering a) the focus and specialization, and b) the approach and length of the TPP component.
- Provide students with more intentionally selected sites that are *community centres* and host *ethnolinguistic* and from *high needs social class parents/families*.
- Enhance to a more time-intensive TPP in the final year of study (e.g., with two 2-month internships across both semesters of the fourth year).

- Re-think/strengthen the supervision of the students in the field/ECEC sites with observation/supervision “protocols” that can be designed with ECEC mentoring teachers and Program faculty.
- Transform certain compulsory courses to elective, and the reverse. Re-think a scheduling plan in which the elective course of the First Aid Topics for Early Childhood, could be offered as compulsory or be included in the workshops/laboratories during the internship.
- Improve the consultation of students, as well as that of stakeholders and external experts/partners for periodic revisions of the curriculum.
- Consider enriching the curriculum of study in critically important domains namely, bilingual/multilingual/multicultural education and early childhood language development. These respond to current immigrant/refugee populations, both locally and internationally.
- Encourage students to take advantage of the ERASMUS or other relevant programs. Establish more Erasmus agreements with universities and childcare providers.
- The library of UWA should implement the use of Educational Research Abstracts Online (ERA) (Taylor & Francis) that is a comprehensive database, comprising fully indexed abstracts that cover the current international research in education.
- Enrich the English version of their website by publishing important announcements and news more often and consider creating an e-Newsletter to maintain contact with students, alumni, schools, social partners and stakeholders.

#### IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: **1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11 and 12**

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **3.**

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are: **None.**

The Principles where failure of compliance was identified are: **None.**

Overall Judgement	
Fully compliant	<b>V</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

## The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname

Signature

1. **Prof. Leonidas Kyriakides (Chair)**  
University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus
2. **Prof. Emer. Eleni Katsarou**  
University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL, USA
3. **Prof. Emer. Athanasios Gagatsis**  
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4. **Assoc. Prof. Emer. Gina Ioannitou – Valavanidou**  
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