



**ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ**  
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



**Εθνική Αρχή  
Ανώτατης Εκπαίδευσης**  
Hellenic Authority  
for Higher Education

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

**Physiotherapy**

**Institution: University of West Attica**

**Date: 24 September 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  
**Physiotherapy** of the **University of West Attica** for the purposes of  
granting accreditation

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

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

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the new undergraduate study programme in operation of **Physiotherapy** 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. Dr. Mary Andrianopoulos (Chair)**

Professor, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Massachusetts, United States of America

**2. Dr. Stefanos Volianitis**

Associate Professor, Qatar University, Doha, Qatar

**3. Dr. George Panayiotou**

Associate Professor, European University Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus

**4. Mr. Stavros Stathopoulos**

Panhellenic Association of Physiotherapists, Athens, Greece

**5. Ms. Aikaterini Pappa**

Student of Medicine, University of Ioannina, Ioannina, Greece

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

The External Evaluation and Accreditation Panel (EEAP) attended an orientation remotely via Zoom delivered by Dr. Christina Besta, General Manager of the National Authority of Higher Education (EQAAE) on September 12, 2022. The procedures and criteria for the evaluation of the new physiotherapy undergraduate programme at the University of West Attica in Athens were reviewed at that time. The Hellenic Authority of Higher Education (HAHE) also provided approximately eight different documents for the panel to review in advance of the accreditation process and site visit (e.g., code of ethics, P1B standards, P12B guidelines, P13B mapping grid guidelines for accreditation, P14B template, etc.). The evaluation of the physiotherapy programme occurred on September 18-24, 2022. Four of the five panel members attended on site, and one participated remotely. The meetings with the Vice Rector, President, and other members of MODIP, OMEA, the Department head, faculty, teaching staff, and students occurred on site. However, the meeting with the off-campus employers, clinical supervisors, and stakeholders was held remotely using a videoconferencing platform; however, the audio and video were very poor during this meeting. The panel met with the following individuals:

### **Rector, Vice-Rector, President of MODIP, Department Head**

- Professor Panayiotis Kladis, Rector
- Professor Efstathia Papageorgiou, Vice-Rector, President of MODIP
- Professor George Gioftsos, Head of the Department

### **OMEA, MODIP Representatives and Staff**

- Professor George Georgoudis, President of OMEA
- Professor George Papathanasiou, Member of OMEA
- Professor Eirine Grammatopoulou, Member of OMEA
- Associate Professor Maria Papandreou, Member of OMEA
- Associate Professor Dafni Bakalidou, Member of OMEA
- Dr. Marisa Sigala, Administrative Head of MODIP Department

### **Teaching Staff Members**

- Professor Vasiliki Sakellari Professor Marianna Papadopoulou, Professor
- Associate Professor George Koumantakis
- Assistant Professor Dimitrios Stasinopoulos
- Assistant Professor Eirine Patsaki
- Lecturer Georgia Petta
- Lecturer Aikaterimi Kompoti
- Lecturer Dorothea Makrygianni

### **Physiotherapy Undergraduate Students (one female student participated remotely)**

- Mr. Konstantinos Danalis (semester 6)
- Mr. Spiros Volaris (semester 2)
- Mr. Andrea Touma (semester 2)
- Mr. John Paraskevas (semester 4)
- Mr. Christos Paloudis, student (semester 6)
- Mrs. Paraskevi Tsampali, student (semester 6)
- Mrs. Nektaria-Aggeliki Komisopoulou (semester 4)
- Mr. Kyriakos-Christoforos Papagiannidis (semester 2)
- Mr. Alexadros Pallidis (semester 4)

### **Tour of Facilities, Laboratories, Libraries, Other Facilities**

- Teaching Staff who help in the laboratories
- Dr. Magdalini Stamou, Lab Teaching Staff
- Dr. Nikolaos Chrysagis, Lab Teaching Staff
- Elisavet Ntala, Head of Secretariat
- Adamantia Daktylidou, Member of Secretariat
- Eleni Charalampidi, Member of Secretariat
- Doctoral Students presenting demonstrations in laboratories

### **Employers, Clinical and Social Partners (participants met with EEAP remotely)**

- Mrs. Theano Tsoga, Pramedical Director, KAT General Public Hospital
- Mr. Evaggelos Trigonis, Pramedical Director, G. Gennimatas General Public Hospital
- Mrs. Sotiria Vrouva, Physiotherapy Dept. Supervisor, 401 Military Hospital
- Mr. Kostas Psarogiorgos, Physiotherapy Dept. Supervisor, Metropolitan General & Mitera Private Hospital
- Mr. Antonios Doukas, Physiotherapy Dept. Supervisor, Theseus Private Rehabilitation Centre
- Mr. Dimitrios-Antonios Karamintzas, Attiko Hospital, Centre of excellence

### **Documentation**

The panel also reviewed approximately 66 different documents that were submitted by the Department of Physiotherapy ranging from four departmental quality indicators (2017-2018, 2018-2019, 2019-2020, and 2020-2021 academic years), three quality indicators related to the undergraduate programme of physiotherapy (2018-2019, 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 academic years), a table of contents, the Department's Proposal for Academic Certification of the New Undergraduate Programme in Physiotherapy at West Attica, updated strategic plan, feasibility and sustainability study, four-year business plan, and a host of other documents. The documentation was extremely well-organised chronologically. During the site visit the panel requested supplemental materials that included faculty curriculum vitae (CV), copies of 15 Power Presentations the Department presented during the site visit, a list of external and internal funds and research grants awarded to members of the Department, etc.. The panel was also provided hardcopy samples of reports, other administrative documents, undergraduate clinical practicum projects, samples of student portfolios, off-campus supervisors/stakeholders evaluations of students, thesis projects, laboratory assignments, and correspondences. The Department provided the EEAP these materials promptly.

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

The Department of Physiotherapy in Athens was established in September 1973 as a department of KATEE. A decade later (1983) the Department became part of the Technical Educational Institution (TEI) in Athens. During the 2018-2019 academic year, the Department merged with the former physiotherapy programme of TEI in Athens and physically relocated to the Egaleo Park campus. The University of West Attica is among the largest in the country with an active enrolment of 53,410 undergraduates, 4,214 graduate students, 673 doctoral candidates, and 32 post-doctoral fellows. The new undergraduate programme in physiotherapy is housed in one of the six schools at the University, the School of Health Sciences and Welfare. During the 2019 year, the four other departments of physiotherapy in the country followed suit and were established as undergraduate programmes in physiotherapy in Higher Education Institutions (HEI) (Thessaly, Patra, Thessaloniki, and Sparta). Over the past 35 years since its establishment, the Department at West Attica is recognised for its excellence in educating and clinically training the next generation of physiotherapists in the country. Administrators and faculty reported that the Department is now better positioned to promote and foster research scholarship and the training of physiotherapy scientists who will go on and join the workforce and improve the quality of life of its citizens in the country.

The Department's buildings and infrastructure on the Egaleo Park campus includes dedicated classrooms, laboratories with equipment for teaching laboratory courses, and three research laboratories (Neuromuscular and Cardiovascular Movement Study Laboratory, Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy Laboratory, Advanced Physiotherapy Laboratory). The three laboratories are self-financed and managed through competitive and/or the Lifelong Learning programmes (KEΔΙΒΙΜ). The Department has access of two auditoriums which are located on both the Egaleo Park and Ancient Olive Park campuses. The offices of the Department's administration, faculty, special and research teaching staff (EDIP, DEP, respectively) are located on the Egaleo Park campus. Successful completion of the Bachelor's degree programme in physiotherapy requires students to complete a new curriculum comprised of compulsory and non-compulsory courses corresponding to a total of 240 credits consistent with the European Credit Transfer System (ECTS).

## 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 place 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**

##### **I. Findings**

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

The aim of the Department is to provide a high-quality education and administrative services to students in physiotherapy consistent with the framework and principles of UNESCO and ECTS system. The Department's mission is focused on excellence in teaching, clinical training, and research for undergraduate, post-graduate, and doctoral students, including continuing education studies.

The Department uses a number of digital technologies to enhance academic instruction and the transfer to theory to clinical practice. Faculty reported during the site visit that the Moodle platform is used mostly by faculty to post lecture notes, assignments and required readings which students can access on- and off-campus. Ninety-five percent (95%) of the courses in the Department have implemented full or partial use of existing digital platforms, such as synchronous and asynchronous tele-education technologies (e-Class). With the assistance of MODIP, the Department is able to collect and analyze statistical data for continual improvement of educational and clinical practices (B3\_2, Section 1 A).

According to the Vice Rector and President of MODIP, students did not “miss one day of classes” during the quarantine lockdown. Some faculty developed video-recorded case studies and other creative assignments to assist students’ acquisition of content and knowledge taught in course and laboratory assignments. Examples of on-line tutorials, video-case studies, and assignments posted on Moodle that faculty created and use for teaching were demonstrated for the EEAP’s behalf. The Department developed and implemented a Research Methodology course that students complete in their second year.

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

The Department’s and University’s strategic goals are well-outlined. The Department is implementing a sustainable “Green” environment and resource management systems on campus and within the laboratories. The Department’s strategic goals and plans align with their SWOT analysis and four-year business plan (B2, B3\_1, B3\_2, and B\_5). Short- and mid-term strategic operational plans were approved and certified by the internal quality assurance unit (ΕΣΔΠ) in 2021.

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

The Department implemented national and European reforms required of HEIs in physiotherapy. The new reform in the EU region also requires that undergraduate students in physiotherapy be evaluated on a regular basis by professional physiotherapist supervisors or stakeholders affiliated with the departments of physiotherapy, so that students’ clinical performance can be assessed during practicum. The Department’s new curriculum in physiotherapy was designed and implemented by the five-member curriculum development committee during the 2018-2019 academic year. The new curriculum was approved by the steering committee of PADA and the Department’s Assembly the same year and was put into operation during the 2021-2022 academic year (B1).

The University administration practices in accordance with the principles and guidelines of the National Authority of Higher Education (ΕΘΑΑΕ). The undergraduate academic curriculum in physiotherapy follows the specifications outlined for theoretical and scientific coursework recognised by the World Physiotherapy Confederation and World Physiotherapy-European Region. The clinical practical competencies are consistent with the expected minimal competencies for an entry-level physiotherapist in the European Region (B6). According to documentation provided, professional physiotherapists collaborating with the Department are reported to be practicing in accordance with the standards and guidelines of the professional association and the University’s quality assurance procedures. The Department’s objectives, quality assurance policy and guidelines are disseminated and posted on University’s website <https://modip.uniwa.gr>.

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

During the 2020-2021 academic year, the Department consisted of 17 permanent academic faculty and staff and 34 temporary faculty/staff comprised of university and academic scholars with teaching responsibilities, contracted teachers (ΕΣΠΑ), lecturers with doctoral

degrees, and 12 doctoral students. The Department currently has 1104 active students (B1, B14, B31). Among the active students, approximately 125 are transfer students from the former TEI physiotherapy programme in Athens.

A four-year business plan and several quality indicators (B5, B8, B9) outline the Department's commitment and projected targets for increasing faculty and staff positions over the next four years to cover the academic curriculum and training of undergraduate and graduate students in physiotherapy at the University.

The faculty, staff and graduate students publish in internationally high impact journals, which are catalogued and accessible through major search engines, including on the Department's and three research laboratory's websites. Based on the Department's data obtained from Scopus over the past five years, the average number of papers published in peer-reviewed scientific journals by faculty/staff at the University is 3.51 per faculty/staff member. The total number of cross-citations for the last 5 years among all members employed by the University is 14.69 citations (0vεo\_PADA\_18\_9\_22(1).pptx).

Information regarding the University's and Department's general operations and procedures, including a list and description of services available to students are outlined in several documents (B1, B18\_1-2, student guide book, etc.). Services available to current and prospective students, foreigners, and others are also accessible on the University's and Department's websites.

#### ***e. The structure of studies***

To facilitate student-centred teaching approaches and life-long learning pedagogies (B12), the structure of many courses include lectures, seminars, guest speakers, tutorials, portfolios, systematic reviews of the literature, case studies, problem-solving/critical thinking assignments that are completed in groups and autonomously. Alternative teaching methods, such as asynchronous teaching models, are used to allow students to master teaching material at their own pace, schedules and learning styles. Course descriptions list the knowledge and skills to be acquired in each course. Graduates from the Department can register with the Panhellenic Association of Physiotherapists.

The Department's Assembly approved and implemented a system for students to file complaints related to courses, study regulations, academic advising, course selection, student services, and grades on exams. An independent three-member complaints committee was also assembled (comprised of the EDIP president, secretary, and a member and/or alternate member) who serve a three-year term with the opportunity for reappointment (B20\_1). The complaints committee provides feedback within five days from the end of the deadline for submitting an objection.

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

The number of students admitted annually depends on the Ministry of National Education and Religious Affairs. The Department requested that the targeted number of students to be admitted annually consist of 60 students. The current active student body in the Department is reported to be 1104 undergraduate students. The total number of registered students during the 2021-2022 academic year is 1166 students (B5). Approximately 125 undergraduates are transfer students from the former TEI in physiotherapy. It is projected that these students will complete their studies by 2024-2025, at which time the total number of enrolled students in the programme is projected to be 600 (B1, B32\_3). Among the undergraduate students enrolled over the past year, between 9-15 were foreign students. The Department has bilateral cooperation agreements with universities abroad through the

ERASMUS programme. To participate, students must be a citizenship of a state within the EU or another country participating in the ERASMUS programme.

#### ***g. Postgraduate studies and research***

The aim of the post-graduate programmes is to foster greater depth of knowledge and skills in specific scientific areas in physiotherapy leading to Master's, doctoral, and post-doctoral studies. The Department's post-graduate curriculum in physiotherapy includes the New Methods in Physiotherapy programme. The duration for earning a Master's Degree in the Department is three academic semesters leading to a total of 90 ECTS credits. The Master's thesis is completed during the third semester. There are currently 43 post-graduate students of which approximately 22 are doctoral students enrolled in the post-graduate programme. The doctoral curriculum is focused on three areas of specialisation: Circulatory and Musculoskeletal System; Nervous System; and Respiratory System. There are currently two post-doctoral fellows (B2). The three research laboratories in the Department enable the post-graduate, doctoral students and the post-doctoral fellows to engage in research. The curricula and requirements of the post-graduate programmes for completion of the Master's and Doctoral theses and post-doctoral fellows research studies are defined by institutional and state legislation. A subset of post-graduates participate in teaching laboratory coursework and mentoring students' thesis research.

## **II. Analysis**

The Department's objectives and quality assurance policies are organised across 17 dimensions (B1, Section 2.2) and include a list of targets, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), benchmarks, timelines, and mechanisms to assess accountability on Departmental and Institutional levels (Tables 2.1 - 2.8, B3\_1, B8, B9). The strategic and four-year business plans include specific examples the Department aims to achieve continued growth and development.

The four-year business plan aligns with the Department's SWOT analysis with respect to specific goals, projections, strategic plans, and quantifiable outcomes to be achieved over the next four years by specific timelines (B3\_1, B3\_2 B5, pp. 12-13). The feasibility study (B4) provides the rationale for increasing the number of students and professionals in physiotherapy given the needs of the ever-changing national and European societies. A descriptive justification regarding the need to better educate and train the next generation of physiotherapists in evidence-based assessments and interventions is also included, especially in light of the aging population of citizens in the country and the impact that the COVID pandemic had on society and the physiotherapy profession.

Digitalisation of the campus and the Department includes wireless access through a Virtual Private Network (VPN). Information is also available online through the University's and Department's website regarding MODIP's internal evaluations conducted on campus, instructions for uploading theses to the University's repository, announcements of openings for faculty and staff positions (APELLA), mechanisms to evaluate faculty and courses electronically (B1, Section 6.2), digital signature software, and electronic access to group hangouts, etc.. Digitalisation of students' practica and internship assignments, record keeping, and evaluations have not been implemented to date.

It is evident that faculty, staff and graduate students are active in research, publishing, presenting and attending conferences both in the state and internationally. The three research laboratories in the Department showcase their active research projects, past and upcoming conferences, conference presentations, and publications. Some of the

laboratories' actual conference presentations and publications are linked to the research laboratories' websites. The Department's website also provides a list of current doctoral students and the faculty mentors for each student. Eight faculty in the Department are currently serving as mentors to the 22 doctoral students.

### III. Conclusions

To date, the new physiotherapy programme has implemented four modifications to the curriculum related to the structure of the programme, which includes the addition of elective courses and modification of teaching hours in clinical practica courses and workloads. It is evident that the new curriculum in physiotherapy evolved alongside with national trends in the country and within the EU to move undergraduate curricula in physiotherapy to the university minimal entry Level 6 classification of physiotherapists (World Physiotherapy European Region, Guidance Document for Minimal Entry-Level of Physiotherapists in Europe, May 2022). The required coursework, practicum and internship requirements are well-outlined and described (B1, Section 5.1-5.7, B11\_1-3, B12, B19, B20\_1, B20\_5), including on the Department's website.

At the request of MODIP (2018), the new curriculum includes more theoretical teaching hours and elimination of some laboratory sections linked to courses (B1). The Research Methods course in the second year of the programme and the thesis in the eighth semester (or two elective course option in lieu of completing the thesis) are also additions to the revised undergraduate curriculum. Although undergraduate students are required to complete a thesis in the eighth semester, the majority of students (60%) choose to complete the additional two course elective option. Among the 40% who opt to complete a thesis, the majority of students conduct systematic reviews of the literature. A very small subset of the 40% who complete a thesis conduct empirical research.

The Department's mission and strategic goals align with the Department's SWOT analysis and four-year business plan (B2, B3\_1, B3\_2, and B\_5). Some projections reported in the four-year business plan reflect either an increase or decrease in students, faculty, and other targets over the course of four consecutive academic years (2021-2025). An analysis of the four-year business plan suggests that there will be: a decrease in the number of students to be admitted annually from 120 to 60; the total number of registered students will decrease from 1166 to 600; growth among faculty will increase from 16 to 21; EDIP and ETEP faculty will increase from 2 to 5; administrative employees will increase from 3 to 5; and budgetary or financial allocations will support improvements of the Department's infrastructure, buildings, classrooms, academic scholars and research programmes.

However, although a SWOT analysis was conducted and its findings are summarised across several axes, the SWOT analysis is based mainly on general information from a variety of resources. More empirical data that demonstrate growth rates and the societal needs on regional, state, and European fronts are lacking. No objective empirical workforce data are cited from published resources or professional associations. The current unemployment rates of physiotherapists in Greece are also not reported. Market analyses are also lacking to empirically support the need to continually increase the number of physiotherapists in the state. More objective data are needed to justify the Department's mission, goals, and strategic planning to increase the number of well-trained physiotherapists that align with emerging market trends and societal and work force needs.

The University's and Department's general operations and procedures, including a list and description of services available to students, are well-outlined in several locations that are easily accessible (B1, B18\_1-2, student handout, University/Department's websites).

The current number of faculty, special and teaching staff, and administrative assistants are not adequate to operate the undergraduate programme of 1104 active students, 43 post-graduate and 22 doctoral students in physiotherapy, especially at an HEI that is among the largest in Greece.

Nonetheless, among the core of 17 permanent faculty, research productivity is evident, but varies across faculty. An analysis of individual faculty profiles and their respective links to the Google Scholar citations platform, the number of citations among the permanent faculty in the Department ranges from approximately 12 to 2,422 citations. H-indices also range among individual permanent faculty from an h-index of 2 to an h-index of 21. The core faculty, including teaching and research faculty are very active in professional, scientific, and administrative positions and service to their professions.

The Department offers a course in ethics and bioethics (P1-1050) and two courses for students' acquisition of digital skills (B11\_2, B12, B13). These courses include the Informatics and Health Sciences (P1-8B10) and Principles of Administration in Health Sciences (P1-8C10). The number of contact and workload hours students spend on topics related to the acquisition of digital skills in theory and laboratory coursework are outlined in documents (B13).

In collaboration with the University, the Department appointed an institutional data protection officer (DPO) in accordance with legislative and institutional regulations for the protection of confidential data and services provided to students, faculty and staff (B1).

Hardcopy paperwork seems to be the norm for processing, recording, and archiving data and forms related to students' off-campus practica and internship placements. Digitalisation of students' and supervisors'/stakeholders' recording of students' contact hours accrued while working with clients at off-campus practicum and internship sites, including students' self-evaluations and supervisor/stakeholders' evaluations of students' performance at their internships, need to be digitalised.

A process is in place for students to exercise self-advocacy. The Department's website and student guide book outline the procedures for filing complaints (B17). Students objections are submitted to an objections' committee within five days of the posting of the students' grade on the course's online classroom and the Department's home page. A flow diagram illustrates the mechanism for students to submit complaints and the individuals or committees responsible in the mediation and resolution process. If a student's complaint is not resolved, it escalates to the president's level, who is responsible for rendering the final decision to the student's complaint. (Slide 20, 4NEO.pptx).

Faculty and staff have been successful submitting proposals and grants to private companies and foundations. Some grants awarded aim to foster international research collaborations and networking opportunities (<https://www.cost.eu/>). During the 2021 year, approximately 207,000 Euros in grant monies were awarded to faculty, staff and the Department (ΕΣΠΑ, ΚΥΔΑ, ΚΕΔΙΒΙΜ, ΑΥΤΟΔΥΝΑΜΑ). Some faculty also have active research collaborations with scientists at other universities in the EU. Faculty research output and the impact of their publications in scientific communities were estimated based on the number of publications, citations, or h-index (e.g. Google Scholar Citations). The core faculty's number of citations and h-indices are approximately on track by rank.

The Department implemented a system for students to file complaints related to courses, study regulations, academic advising, student services, and grades on exams; However, it is, not objective. The number of student complaints filed between the 2017-2018 to 2019-2020 academic years equals 0 (B24\_1-4). Students may be reluctant to file complaints for fear of retribution and stigmatism.

## Panel Judgement

|  |          |
|--|----------|
| <b>Principle 1: Strategic planning, feasibility and sustainability of the academic unit</b>            |          |
| <b>The academic profile and the mission of the academic unit</b>                                       |          |
| Fully compliant  | <b>X</b> |
| Substantially compliant  |          |
| Partially compliant  |          |
| Non-compliant  |          |
| <b>The strategy of the Institution for its academic development</b>                                    |          |
| Fully compliant  |          |
| Substantially compliant  | <b>X</b> |
| Partially compliant  |          |
| Non-compliant  |          |
| <b>The documentation of the feasibility of the operation of the department and the study programme</b> |          |
| Fully compliant  | <b>X</b> |
| Substantially compliant  |          |
| Partially compliant  |          |
| Non-compliant  |          |
| <b>The documentation of the sustainability of the new department</b>                                   |          |
| Fully compliant  | <b>X</b> |
| Substantially compliant  |          |
| Partially compliant  |          |
| Non-compliant  |          |
| <b>The structure of studies</b>  |          |
| Fully compliant  | <b>X</b> |
| Substantially compliant  |          |
| Partially compliant  |          |
| Non-compliant  |          |
| <b>The number of admitted students</b>   |          |
| Fully compliant  |          |
| Substantially compliant  | <b>X</b> |
| Partially compliant  |          |
| Non-compliant  |          |
| <b>Postgraduate studies</b>  |          |
| Fully compliant  | <b>X</b> |
| Substantially compliant  |          |
| Partially compliant  |          |
| Non-compliant  |          |



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

### Panel Recommendations

- There was consensus among the panel that the Department determine the supply and demand and market trends of physiotherapists regionally, nationally and within the EU. Survey analyses of alumni, stakeholders, and professional associations of physiotherapy in Greece and within the EU will provide more objective empirical evidence with which the Department can strategically plan based on unemployment rates and societal and workforce needs.
- A greater number of permanent and full-time faculty, dedicated lecture halls, classrooms, updated laboratories, including upgrading equipment in the laboratories used for teaching and research purposes, computer labs are necessary for the Department to successfully manage and sustain its operations.
- Off-campus stakeholders should be included in seminars and workshops organised by the Department. These opportunities may foster greater professional and research collaborations and continuing education opportunities. This recommendation was also reported in MODIP's 2021 internal evaluation report.
- Greater digitalisation is necessary for processing, recording and archiving student data, performance reports and other documentation for students' off-campus practicum and internships. Greater digitalisation will help the Department achieve its "Green" goal by moving away from hard copy documentation and record keeping.
- The Department aspires to increase student participation in courses as a means to decrease the duration for students to complete their studies, improve academic scores and graduation rates. Since class attendance is not mandatory in some courses, it is suggested that faculty increase the number of requirements and assignments in these courses to keep students more engaged in activities and projects that require them to be on-campus.
- Students who are falling behind in completing of the programme in a timely manner need to be more closely monitored. It is suggested that students be identified earlier and be provided the supports they need (or be referred to the appropriate resources/offices on campus) to ensure successful completion of their studies.
- The Department aspires to attract more students into their post-graduate programmes It is suggested that the Department organise a series of in-services, regional and state conferences for students and professionals to continue their professional education. It is suggested that the Department disseminate such announcements in the public domain, such as on their websites and through the professional physiotherapy association. These opportunities will also serve to promote faculty and student accomplishments, alumni networking, and mobility of students and faculty abroad (e.g. ERASMUS).
- A variety of feedback methodologies should be implemented to continually solicit feedback not only from students, but also from off-campus stakeholders/supervisors

regarding practical and clinical knowledge needed for students to be competitive and successful for completing off-campus practica.

- It is suggested that more faculty and staff apply for grants and disseminate their research findings in high-impact journals. Perhaps an accomplished senior faculty member or staff can mentor junior faculty and research staff. As such, it is believed that the Department will be more competitive for obtaining research grants from European and international funding agencies.
- It is suggested that the Department increase undergraduate student involvement in research projects currently being conducted in the three research laboratories. This will allow more undergraduates to conduct empirical research for completion of the thesis.
- The laboratories need to be more accessible to students outside of scheduled course and laboratory sessions. This will enable students to complete assignments, practice clinical procedures, and conduct research more independently. The hours that the laboratories are open to students should be posted on the Department's website and course syllabi. Perhaps doctoral students can cover the extended hours. Continue to highlight and post faculty, staff, and student accomplishments on the Department's and three research laboratories websites in Greek and English languages.
- The system for filing complaints needs to ensure and maintain student confidentiality.

## 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

### I. Findings

The Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency (HQA) certified the Institution's implementation of an Internal Quality Assurance System (IQA). The Department has a published Institutional Quality Assurance Policy to ensure a high-quality education and training for students in physiotherapy, including research scholarship of faculty and staff. The Department's objectives for continual improvement of the new curriculum in physiotherapy are described in detail. Objectives are evaluated using a set of quality indicators that partially follow a Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-based (SMART) target setting and assessment format. The outcomes of the Department's internal quality assessment are analysed by OMEA in conjunction with MODIP. The outcomes of the internal evaluation are communicated and discussed with the Department's academic staff and General Assembly. The internal evaluation report is posted on the Department's and University's websites.

The Department's quality objectives are aligned with the Institution's strategic objectives. However, the Department's objectives are not the result of a qualitative needs assessment of

existing policies and procedures (B19). Although the Institution's strategic and operational planning includes a high-quality education for its students, the Department's KPIs do not include objectives and mechanisms to assess the teaching effectiveness of faculty and clinical staff using advanced pedagogical techniques. At the current time, targeting of student learning outcomes do not appear to be interconnected using Bloom's taxonomy with respect to learning target outcomes, student learning actions and student assessments. In addition, although it is reported that stakeholders practice in compliance with national and European standards and minimal entry-level competencies, defined policies or objectives were not identified regarding stakeholders' compliance or non-compliance with the Department's objectives, strategic plans, and KPIs. Moreover, there appears to be no qualitative and quantitative assessment of individual faculty and research staff regarding their teaching effectiveness and research output by an independent body (e.g., OMEA). Course evaluations are primarily based on students' levels of satisfaction.

## **II. Analysis**

The University was certified by the HQA for its implementation of an IQA system to monitor and evaluate the quality of the education, training, and services that the Institution provides to its students, including faculty research activities. The University's certification is valid for four-years from 11/02/2021 to 10/02/2025. The accreditation document (B25) is accessible on the Institution's website.

Structured policies and procedures are outlined to assess the Department's objectives and KPIs. However, objective data were not provided with which to assess to the Department's progress in meeting its policies, objectives, and milestones for modifying and improving the physiotherapy programme since it joined the University. In addition, there does not appear to be an allocation of specific strategic tasks related to the Department's teaching and research staff with respect to its development strategy. There is no clear process outlined for monitoring the progressive achievement of these objectives. It should be noted that the Institution's Strategic and Operational Planning is projected to be completed in 2023.

HQA's accreditation report indicates that annual self-assessments of the Department are to be carried out by the OMEA. However, the outcomes of OMEA's assessment were neither identified in the documentation provided to the EEAP nor have they yet to be posted on the Department's website. Individual qualitative objectives to achieve the Department's Strategic Objectives are not broken down into specific and detailed actions with a clear definition of the individuals who are accountable for their implementation by designated timelines. A detailed roadmap was not found regarding short-, medium- and long-term milestones for achieving the Department's objectives.

## **III. Conclusions**

Departmental and Institutional Quality Assurance Policies are structured based on the HQA quality policies as evidenced by the findings of the recent external evaluation (2018). The Department's quality assurance policy (B7) outlines detailed strategic objectives of the academic unit, which are consistent with the Institutional Objectives that refer to future Institutional practices rather than existing ones (B3.1).

The Department's quality assurance statement provides a list of key areas for improving the curriculum and quality objectives that are categorised into KPIs, which are also outlined in the Department's quality assurance statement (B9). An analysis of the KPIs; however, does

not seem to fully follow the SMART format. For example, the KPIs are based on a set of objectives that are not sufficiently specific, yet performance outcome data seem to be measurable quantitatively by time-bound implementation periods of one year. No outcome data regarding the attainability of KPIs are reported to date, including outcomes from OMEA’s assessment of the Department, or on the effectiveness of individual administrative staff, faculty and staff, stakeholders, etc.

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

- The Department's target setting ideally should be fully aligned with the SMART format with particular attention to measurable and achievable goals related to attainability.
- It is recommended that the Department adopt a system of individual target setting and self-evaluation of each teaching and research staff member as deemed necessary.
- The Department's target setting also requires individual analysis, preferably using a roadmap format, for each target specifically related to stakeholders.
- It is recommended that a periodic evaluation be implemented to assess the effectiveness of the Department’s administrative, educational, research and social actions using quantitative and qualitative measurements.
- It is recommended that the Department focus on development of their human resources as envisaged by the strategic planning of the Institution.
- Greater involvement of academic staff members is recommended for the implementation and monitoring of the Department’s objectives and policies as needed. For example, academic staff can be potentially assigned and accountable for various targeted actions in line with relevant objectives.
- It is recommended that policies, procedures, and specific actions be established in the event there is non-compliance with the Department's quality policies.

### **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**

##### **I. Findings**

As reported in Principle 1, the physiotherapy programme was designed based on standards and recommendations outlined by World Physiotherapy (2018, 2022), World Health Organisation (WHO), and European Qualifications Framework (EQF) for physiotherapists. As reported in the feasibility study (B4, pp. 14-29), the Department studied the curricula across several foreign physiotherapy programmes to develop the new programme at West Attica. Several experts were consulted from the former TEI physiotherapy programme in Athens and the Chief Executive Officer of WCPT (Dr. Jonathon Kruger). The following excerpt is taken from

Dr. Kruger's letter dated 20/09/2017 to the Ministry of Education of Greece, *"Current professional education and practices (in Greece) are consistent with the guidelines of WCPT and the activities of the association are consistent with those of other WCPT member organisations. Recognising and using the title physical therapist in the Greece is consistent with the international profession represented by WCPT"*.

The feasibility study highlights the Department's objectives along with inputs and expected outputs related to the programme (B4, pp. 5-6 of B4). The new curriculum includes the following courses: 10 general background; eight special background; 20 specialty courses; and nine electives. The OMEA committee is responsible for the assessment of the program and its continual re-evaluation of the Department. OMEA meets on a scheduled basis or at the request of the teaching staff to discuss possible amendments to the programme. The committee's conclusions are forwarded to the General Assembly for further actions. All revisions are accredited by the University body (B12, Senate Minutes 12/20.06.2018, 1/20.02.2020 and Assembly Minutes 14/02.07.2018, 28/19.11.2019, 29/26.11.2019, 25/02.11.2021). As reported in the meeting minutes, OMEA takes into consideration feedback from stakeholders, international experts, undergraduate, and graduate students.

The student guidebook is comprehensive, concise, informative, and accessible in both Greek and English languages on the Department's and University's websites.

## **II. Analysis**

The new curriculum in the physiotherapy program was developed according to European academic standards and minimal entry-level competencies equivalent with a Level 6 physiotherapy programme in the Europe region (e.g., WCPT, EQF, etc.). International professional market requirements and collaborations with private and public clinics and hospitals were also taken into consideration.

The curriculum in physiotherapy was revised and implemented following careful study of the old curriculum. The curriculum includes new prerequisite requirements and new courses of study. The process of approving and modifying the curriculum involves the Departmental Assembly in collaboration with MODIP and the Institution's Assembly. The Department's Assembly requested that an external board of experts be consulted on any curriculum changes. The external board will consist of qualified academic faculty and experts from other universities and from industry. Until recently, the process only included feedback from the Department Assembly and stakeholders.

## **III. Conclusions**

The Department's new curriculum is consistent with universal standards and expectations for physiotherapy programmes in Greece and the EU. The new physiotherapy programme is concise, comprehensive, and well-structured in that it makes it possible for students to acquire basic and specialised knowledge during their four years of studies. Students earn more than 1000 hours of clinical practice consistent with the requirements of other physiotherapy programmes at universities in Greece (and the old TEI programme).

## Panel Judgement

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

## Panel Recommendations

- Although digital literacy is somewhat addressed in the curriculum and only includes one module, it is recommended that the curriculum include more course modules focused on digital literacy.
- In preparation of implementing and ensuring compliance with the future WHO rehabilitation standards of 2030, the Department will benefit from multidisciplinary input from other health professions.
- The Department should continue to establish a bilateral mutual beneficiary relationship with officially recognised patient groups, the student board, national Physiotherapy Association, and surrounding municipalities.
- It is recommended that the Department accurately report and post on their website labour market data regarding the employment of graduates.



## 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**

#### **I. Findings**

#### ***Respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths***

A small subset of courses does not appear to be essential or directly related to the requirements of the Physiotherapy profession and are likely to constrain other key curriculum needs. Students' active role in the learning processes does not seem to be significantly enhanced in all courses, especially in those with theoretical teaching. It is also unclear how students' Learning Outcomes as described in the course outlines are linked to the acquisition of human Soft Skills (e.g., creativity, problem solving, critical thinking, organisation, adaptability, teamwork, etc.) or General Competencies. Examination activities do not appear to be linked to the Learning Outcomes and General Competences.

There does not appear to be any provisions in place for shaping the learning experience to meet the needs of students with learning difficulties and constraints. Accessibility of facilities are provided for students with mainly mobility disabilities. There is also insufficient coverage of Learning Outcomes and General Competencies in some courses suitable for students participating in the ERASMUS programme. The curriculum includes a research methods course in the programme's second year; however, it is difficult to ensure that students will acquire research skills and competencies since 60% of undergraduates substitute the two-course elective option in lieu of completing a thesis.

***Considers and uses different modes of delivery, where appropriate***

Modes of teaching instruction in some courses are primarily based on teacher-centred approaches. The Department's student-centred approach to instruction relates mainly to issues of access, counselling, and management of student complaints rather than to the design of the learning process/experience. The predominant teacher-centred approaches combined with the non-compulsory participation in theoretical courses do not link learning activities to theoretical instruction with well-defined implementation deadlines. There also appears to be an absence of contemporary pedagogical methods in some courses. Use of technology in some courses is limited to online platforms to upload and host course content. Course descriptions do not include interactive, contemporary pedagogical tools and applications.

***Flexibly uses a variety of pedagogical methods***

Limiting factors for incorporating and adopting more innovative pedagogical approaches may be due to lack of access to more contemporary software and platforms, teaching faculty's and instructors' resistance to change from more traditional teaching approaches, lack of training and faculty development in more innovative learning approaches, and the disproportionately large number of students.

***Regularly evaluates and adjusts the modes of delivery and pedagogical methods aiming at improvement***

Students assess course modules at the end of each semester. The outcomes of the students' evaluations are presented to the Department's General Assembly. However, there are no specific guidelines for modifying each course based on student feedback. In addition, there does not appear to be a process for self- or peer-evaluation of teaching faculty and staff. There is no process in place for target setting and compliance monitoring in each course.

***Regularly evaluates the quality and effectiveness of teaching, as documented especially through student surveys***

It appears that students evaluate a large number of modules at the end of each semester. A very high percentage of students complete course evaluations and course ratings are high. It is evident that students are satisfied with their learning experience.

***Reinforces the student's sense of autonomy, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teaching staff***

There is an absence of a variety of learning modes and activities that allow students to be autonomous and independent entities involved in the learning process. Based on student reports during the site visit, faculty provide students guidance; however, the guidance mainly concerns administrative issues rather than issues relating to the learning process. Students also reported that the Department's laboratory facilities are not available beyond scheduled course and laboratory times. Students are not able to independently work and practice using laboratory equipment and facilities under the supervision of laboratory mentors outside of class.

***Promotes mutual respect in the student - teacher relationship***

A culture of mutual respect and understanding between faculty and students is evident.

***Applies appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints***

The University has a Student Advocate in place to assist in the timely resolution of student issues, mainly through mediation or referral for further investigation as needed. An organised complaints management process with a specific decision-making flow chart is in place for students to file complaints.

## II. Analysis

The design of each individual course should ideally satisfy simultaneously both students' acquisition of basic knowledge and the development of Soft Skills and competencies in physiotherapy based on the ESCO framework, etc. A minor number of courses are not directly related to the Physiotherapy Profession, but to Sports Science (e.g., Adapted Physical Education) and Dietetics / Nutrition (e.g. Clinical Nutrition and Dietetics). As such, this seems to restrict students from completing courses that enable them to incorporate other coursework more closely related to the expected minimum competencies for an entry-level physiotherapist in the Europe region (2022), such as interpersonal, interdisciplinary communication, digital skills, etc. Course modules that target the development of soft skills include two (2) courses, Informatics and Health Sciences and Principles of Management in Health Sciences, but these courses are listed as elective modules and as a substitute for completion of the Thesis. A large number of students in the programme will not benefit from these courses since they are not required.

A closer examination of course modules revealed that some course modules include Learning Outcomes that are extremely inadequate and not well-aligned with course content and assessment activities (e.g., Physiology, Biophysics, Pharmacology). In contrast, some course modules show effective application of pedagogical approaches that link learning outcomes to course content and assessment activities (e.g., Kinesiology and Biomechanics, Kinesiotherapy, Research Methodology). However, these courses require some tweaking and greater specificity. Several courses include competences to be acquired through "Analysis and synthesis of data and information", "Decision-making", "Autonomous work" and "Teamwork - participation in interdisciplinary teams" etc. Yet, these courses do not include course outlines with appropriate learning and assessment activities to facilitate acquisition of specific competencies (e.g., Anatomy, Neurophysiology, Neurology, Pharmacology).

It is also evident that some courses assess skill mastery and knowledge based on one final examination. There are instances where courses require assignments that get factored into students' final grade, but they are limited to an oral presentation rather than submission of a written assignment on which feedback can be provided (e.g., Therapeutic Massage Techniques). Grading guides, such as rubrics, for assigning students' final grade are also lacking that explicitly link the Learning Criteria to be achieved with level of skill acquisition, completion and/or mastery of specific assignments, portfolios, presentations, and other course requirements. Some course modules, such as Anatomy, Neurophysiology, and Neurology, which are available to students through the ERASMUS programme, only require a project as the learning activity. Single assignments as the sole learning activity are not sufficient to acquire the full complement of Learning Outcomes and competences in physiotherapy for students participating in the ERASMUS programme.

A limitation to the curriculum is apparent with respect to meeting the specific learning needs of students with learning difficulties and/or learning disabilities (PWD), particularly students with mobility problems. It is not evident whether procedures are in place to provide assessment and special accommodations for students identified or who self-report as having learning difficulties/disabilities upon their admission into the programme. Procedures should be transparent for referring students with learning difficulties/disabilities to appropriate specialists for assessment and accommodations. It is also not apparent whether faculty and staff are trained in Universal Design and other techniques to modify curricula, so they are more accessible to students' with learning difficulties/disabilities in collaboration with the "ACCESS (PROSVASI)" committee.

Academic instruction and teaching activities for students to acquire knowledge and skills appear to be mainly limited to face-to-face lectures. It appears there is a lack of or limited implementation of activities that promote active participation of students in the learning process using more contemporary pedagogical approaches and interactive tools. There also appears to be no interconnection between advanced pedagogical approaches and course content, including lack of proficiency assessment activities. Although academic staff oversee students' clinical practica and internships, student placements primarily include public and private clinical facilities with supervisors/stakeholders that have limited experience in basic pedagogical instruction. Placement of students during internships at sports clubs and facilities for students to engage in applied sports physiotherapy and/or professional/semi-professional sports.

Course evaluations are primarily limited to students' subjective assessment through a questionnaire to assess quality of teaching, course organisation, and the adequacy of the teaching materials. There is a need to establish and implement well-defined criteria for assessing faculty, staff and the curriculum for its quality. Specialists and academic experts in the pedagogical sciences can assist the Department and faculty in updating and modifying their curricula and teaching instruction to more student-centred approaches. It is suggested that OMEA assist the Department and faculty in not only evaluating whether courses include student-centred practices, but in helping to implement teaching pedagogies focused on student-centred approaches.

The quality and effectiveness of all courses in the curriculum are systematically assessed at the end of each semester. Based on 2021 data, a total of 36 of the 43 courses (86%) were evaluated and the average of students' grading of courses appears to be satisfactory (margin for improvement is 3.82/5 or 76.4%). Student enrolment in the Department during the 2021-year included 1006 students (first to >n+2 year of study). Student participation in the course assessments is very high since 910 students (90.5%) participated in the evaluation process 90.5%.

Students reported during the site visit that faculty are available by appointment to help guide them whenever the need arises. Faculty members are required to hold office hours for advising, academic support, and counselling twice weekly per course. Students expressed that there is mutual respect among students and academic faculty, specialty/teaching staff, and administrators. The Department has a procedure for students to submit complaints and grievances. Mediation and resolution of student's complaints are managed using a multi-stage progression that involves faculty, the student's advisor, administrators, etc., at each level.

### **III. Conclusions**

Although there is some evidence of courses that utilise more student-centred teaching and assessment approaches, many courses still appear to be primarily teacher centred. The curriculum in physiotherapy needs to be streamlined so that courses specifically delineate Learning Outcomes to be achieved, demonstrated, and assessed in each course module with minimal entry-level theoretical knowledge and competencies. Many courses lack a variety of assessment activities and methods to adequately assess students' mastery and proficiency in each course that align with the Department's objectives and curriculum.

Continuous professional development of faculty and teaching staff is lacking, especially regarding the use of more innovative and contemporary student-centred teaching approaches that facilitate active student participation and life-long learning. The faculty-

student ratio is currently significantly high and hinders the appropriate implementation of more student-centred learning approaches. The laboratory infrastructure is inadequate and out-dated for students to engage in hands-on laboratory practice. The laboratories have limited access outside of scheduled course times for students to practice and conduct research under the supervision of laboratory teaching staff or doctoral students.

The curriculum in the physiotherapy is comprehensive; however, coursework is lacking in the physiotherapy sciences and other specialty topics. Although provisions are in place to support students with disabilities, accommodations primarily consist of accessibility to facilities for students with physical disabilities. Procedures to identify and support students with learning difficulties/disabilities appear to be absent. Faculty and teaching staff development is not evident with respect to adapting instruction and students' learning experiences on a case-by-case basis for students who require special accommodations.

The current curriculum does not take into consideration the acquisition of knowledge and skills needed to facilitate outgoing or incoming students' participation in the ERASMUS programme. Greater faculty and student collaborations with institutions abroad through the ERASMUS program would be beneficial. The current procedures for submitting, mediating and resolving student complaints requires greater objectivity. An unbiased second member, moderator, or external examiner is warranted. In the event students' grades need to be ratified, the inclusion an independent body has been successfully implemented at universities abroad.

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

- Consider creating distinct specialisation pathways towards the end of studies without imposing restrictions on the acquisition of diverse basic knowledge.
- Separating the subjects on Circulatory and Musculoskeletal Systems into two autonomous areas is suggested as they contain two well-defined content areas.
- Consider removing for the curriculum or integrating the critical content of the Adapted Physical Education or Clinical Dietetics modules into other existing subjects (e.g., Clinical Exercise Physiology).
- In theoretical courses where attendance is not compulsory, ensure active participation of students through learning activities (e.g., case studies, quizzes, group activities, etc.).

- It is essential to redesign courses in the programme so that course content targets the acquisition of fundamental Soft Skills as well as the General Competences using hierarchical configurations of Bloom's scale for Learning Outcomes.
- Although the Research Methods course is part of the curriculum in the second year, introducing a compulsory research approach module so that it is among one of the two electives students can complete in lieu of the thesis.
- Full equivalence of teaching and Learning Activities should be guaranteed between ERASMUS students and students who are native speakers of the Greek language.
- Individual and group work is suggested in all courses as part of the assessment activities along with other learning activities to ensure the acquisition of Soft Skills.
- The link between Learning Outcomes, module content (in each teaching unit) and assessment methods per module should be demonstrated and documented. A variety of diverse assessments with activities of varying importance (e.g. midterm, final examination, written assignments, presentations, case studies, short quizzes). Use of the e-class and Moodle platforms are recommended for these activities.
- The disproportionately large number of students in the programme do not allow for focus and quality control of teaching and assessment. Training post-graduate students and doctoral candidates to support learning and continuous assessment activities in each module can supplement teaching loads.
- A clear process and procedures to identify individuals with specific learning difficulties/disabilities will help to optimise their ability to access the curriculum. It is suggested that faculty engage in implementing appropriate accommodations needed by students with disabilities. Implementation of a vocational training scheme may better prepare students with learning difficulties/disabilities to enter the workforce.
- A course focused on inter-professional practice and inter-professional communication between health care professionals and clients/patients whom they serve with physiotherapy needs will be beneficial to the programme.
- While the content of the curriculum and the individual modules seem relatively adequate, a redesign of the pedagogical approach to the learning experience is recommended. Focus should be on the student rather than the teacher through face-to-face teaching. Training faculty, staff, stakeholder, and doctoral students in contemporary pedagogical practices and new technologies in education will improve teaching instruction. The use of platforms for posting course content and the use of email for correspondence between teachers and students alone are not sufficient for student-centred learning. Assistance from experts in Pedagogical Sciences and the guidance and monitoring of compliance among all faculty in the Department by OMEA are essential. Regular continuing education trainings are recommended.
- Establishing partnerships with sports facilities to enhance the students' practical learning experiences may be valuable.
- Decreasing the student-teacher ratio on the basis of international best practices to facilitate effective implementation of modern pedagogical practices is suggested.
- The effectiveness of course modules and students' learning experience can be completed with anonymous electronic online surveys (through e-class or Moodle) during different periods of the module delivery (e.g., at the end of each lecture or after every 2-3 classes or at midterm during the semester). As such, instructors can address any learning constraints or issues raised earlier in the semester.
- Consider good practices utilised by universities abroad that are among the highest-ranking HEIs to identify assessment procedures that provide greatest student feedback of

courses. Implementations of student and OMEA feedback to continually improve the curriculum using SMART targets are optimal.

- Planning laboratory exercises and granting supervised access to laboratories for students to practice laboratory techniques and conduct research for their Thesis is recommended with the assistance for doctoral mentors.
- Revision of the students' complaints policy to a more objective, faster decision-making processes is recommended, especially if students are challenge their grades in the course. Inclusion of an examiner, moderator and/or an external examiner is recommended.

## **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**

#### **I. Findings**

##### **Student Registration**

Students register in the programme after successful completion and performance on the National University Entry Exams. In contrast, student transfers are in accordance with written regulations. The registration of newly admitted students is based on procedures and supporting documents according to ministerial regulations. The supporting documents and the relevant deadlines are announced yearly by the Secretariat and follow the Internal Operating Regulations, which are posted on the Department's website.

##### **Information-Student Support**

Newly admitted students are welcomed with a ceremony held at the beginning of each academic year. At this time, students are introduced to the curriculum, along with information regarding their rights and obligations, campus facilities and the administrative functions of the Department, the Head of Department and faculty members.



### ***Monitoring student progress***

Monitoring of the students' progress is facilitated through the internal evaluation and self-evaluation of the programme. Based on the outcomes of these evaluations, OMEA proposes actions aiming to optimise student participation, whereas the programme committee proposes modifications to the curriculum. Academic advisors are available to all students to provide advice related to successful completion of courses and promote student's timely progression through the degree programme.

### ***Student Mobility***

The Department encourages and facilitates student mobility for studies or internships in HEIs or research institutions and organisations within the framework of the ERASMUS + European Mobility Programme. The ERASMUS + programme provides students with a scholarship to cover related living costs, tuition and fees waivers abroad for the period of time students spend studying at a foreign university. The students in the Department are informed about the mobility programmes by the ERASMUS + Coordinator, the deputy of the ERASMUS + Coordinator, information available on the website, and the Department's Mobility Regulations, including by the Department of International Academic Affairs and Student Exchange.

The Department has entered into bilateral cooperation agreements with universities abroad in that undergraduate students can attend a part of their study programme, or prepare all or part of their thesis, for a period that cannot be less than 3 months, or longer than one year. Importantly, the student's Learning Agreement with the host university needs to be approved by the Department's General Assembly and the ERASMUS + department head. The University's Department of International Academic Affairs & Student Exchange publishes announcements regarding internship positions abroad and the required criteria for participation twice a year (every March–April for travel related to the winter semester and every October–November for travel related to the spring semester). The announcement is communicated by email to the students enrolled at the University, academic coordinators, the collaborating institutions (ERASMUS Offices), and announcements posted on the Department's website.

### ***Internship***

The internship (PA) is completed by students as a compulsory specialty course during the eighth semester of the programme for which students earn 10 ECTS and 704 hours (4 months x 22 days x 8 hours) constituting the completion of the clinical training of students in the Science of Physiotherapy. Internships are completed in public and private nursing, medical or rehabilitation facilities. Students are required to have successfully attended all specialty courses (detailed in the new curriculum) and two-thirds of all courses.

The PA provides students the possibility to transfer in practice all of the theoretical and laboratory knowledge that students have acquired over the course of their studies. In this context, the student engages in the evaluation, treatment planning and intervention implementation for patients hospitalised in Pathology, Rheumatology, Surgery, Cardiology, Cardiac Surgery, Thoracic Surgery, Orthopaedics, Paediatric Pulmonology, Neurology and Neurosurgery Clinics, as well as in specialised Intensive Care Units.

Prior to the start of the internship, it is necessary to complete a corresponding special contract signed by the University bodies and the President of the Internship Committee. During their internship, students are not compensated unless they are funded by special programs, such as NSRF or ERASMUS + > Student insurance is mandatory to limit the

University's liability. Each student's PA is supervised by faculty members or EDIP in cooperation with the members of the Internship Committee and the responsible supervisor of each institution. The Department's supervisors are selected by the Internship Committee and approved by the Department Assembly.

Students apply to the Department's Secretariat to be considered for the internship at the beginning of the winter and spring semesters following an announcement posted by the Internship Committee on the Department's website. Students are evaluated and earn a score based on pre-determined criteria before students enter the educational institutions. The grading is announced online for each course and students are able to submit a complaint if they disagree with the grade assigned to them. The selection and admission of students by the Institution are based on well-defined criteria, which are published on the Department's website, along with detailed information regarding the Internship and Mobility Regulations.

### ***Thesis***

The thesis, which is offered as a course in the last semester, is optional and should meet specific quality standards. Students can choose a topic from a list prepared by faculty and approved by the Department's General Assembly, which is accessible on the Department's website. After consultation with the proposed supervising professor, students submit a thesis proposal, which needs to be approved by the Department Assembly. The time to complete the thesis is one academic semester, which can be extended by one or two semesters in exceptional cases with the consent of the supervising professor. The thesis is assessed by a committee consisting of three examiners, including the supervising professor. Detailed information on the assignment and examination procedures for the thesis are listed in the Thesis Guide posted on the Department's website. Students have the option to complete two elective courses in lieu of completing the thesis requirement.

### ***Course Recognition-Credit Transfer***

Students can recognise and transfer credits from compulsory and elective courses completed in their programme of study based on the grade and number of credits (ECTS) earned in the host department's programme. The ECTS credits are transferrable providing that course content is similar and consistent with comparable courses in the Department or other institutions abroad.

### ***Student Scholarships and Awards***

The University supports both its undergraduate and post-graduate students through scholarships and awards. The University announces the availability of scholarships and the call for applications on its website. Scholarships are also made available and announced through a variety of organisations, such as the Ministry of Education and Religious Affairs, the State Scholarship Foundation and endowments from other public and private foundations.

### ***Suspension of Studies***

According to law (4009/2011 (F.E.K. 195/06-09-2011), issue one, in article 80, paragraph 9d): students have the right to request that their studies be interrupted temporarily. Accordingly, students' studies can be interrupted for as many semesters as the student requires, but not more than a total of eight semesters. The additional semesters do not count towards the above maximum duration of study. Upon termination of the student's leave of absence, they return to their degree programme for the completion of their studies.

### ***Completion of Studies - Obtaining a Degree & Diploma Supplement***

Earning the Bachelor's degree in physiotherapy requires that students must have successfully passed all courses (compulsory and optional), accrued a total of 240 Credit Units (ECTS), and

completed the Internship requirement. In addition, students must either complete a thesis or opt to take two elective courses in lieu of completing the thesis requirement. Upon completion of the required procedures, a certificate of successful completion of studies is issued by the Secretariat of the Department, which serves as a copy of the Degree. The Diploma Supplement is also issued free of charge, in Greek and English, which is an accompanying and explanatory document, but it does not replace the official degree diploma.

## II. Analysis

The above stated findings support that the academic unit has developed and applied regulations addressing all aspects and phases of the programme (e.g., admission, progression, recognition and degree award). A possible shortcoming may be the elective use of the Academic Advisor service, which can prevent the effectiveness of the scheme.

## III. Conclusions

The Department of Physiotherapy meets all the criteria outlined under Principle 5.

### 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>X</b> |
| Substantially compliant   |          |
| Partially compliant   |          |
| Non-compliant   |          |

### Panel Recommendations

It is recommended that consultation with the Academic Advisor be a mandatory requirement for all students on a yearly basis. As such, student progression can be better monitored and managed more effectively.

## **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**

#### **I. Findings**

##### ***Teaching staff***

The Department currently has 15 permanent faculty (DEP.), of which five (5) are Professors, two (2) are Associate Professors, and five (5) are Assistant Professors, three (3) are Application Lecturers and two (2) members of E.D.I.P. The average weekly teaching load of DEP. members is determined by the current legislation and followed by the Department. All DEP. members are required to undertake the teaching of at least one undergraduate compulsory course per year. The average weekly teaching load of DEP. members is six (6) hours, while for EDIP members is eight (8) hours. Doctoral (Ph.D.) candidates and post-graduate students assist with examinations in courses.

The Department encourages the professional and scientific development of the teaching staff by granting permits for participation in scientific conferences, seminars, short-term teaching positions at universities abroad, including exchange programs between universities abroad (e.g. ERASMUS + programmes).

Additionally, contract teachers are recruited to contribute with specific practical subjects in the programme. The selection of contract teachers is facilitated by the Department Assembly based on recommendations submitted by the evaluation committees established by the Assembly, in accordance with the provisions of the applicable law. The Department's policy is to select contract teachers with high academic qualifications. It is noted that the criteria for the ranking and selection of teachers through the programme, "Acquisition of Academic Teaching Experience for Young Scientists with Ph.D.s", are defined by ELKE.

The Department promotes the development of the teaching staff's skills. The Department also addresses issues related to teaching and makes an effort to create an environment for discussion of good practices, effective teaching methods, prevention and resolution of problems, and implementation of new ideas and methods. The Department encourages participation of its members in the adoption of good and innovative teaching practices.

#### ***Procedures for the selection and development of D.E.P. members***

The Department implements the procedures and selection of DEP (Administrative Educational Staff – ΔΕΠ). members as defined by the current legislation. Through the electronic information system, APELLA, the relevant documents and procedures are posted on the Department's website for nominating and electing members of the DEP. at the various levels. At the same time, through the APELLA system, the Department compiles and updates the Registers of Internal and External electors, from which the members of the electoral bodies are selected for the election procedures, term limits and reappointment of the office of DEP. members in the Department.

#### ***Research environment***

The Department has a strong research orientation and it is internally recognised for its research productivity and publications. The members of the Department publish in internationally prestigious journals, which are catalogued in scholarly search engines (e.g., PubMed, Scopus, PEDro Database, Google Scholar, and ResearchGate). The faculty's research is posted on the Department's website. The Department operates three (3) research laboratories: Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy laboratory, Neuromuscular and Cardiovascular Movement Study laboratory, and Laboratory of Advanced Physiotherapy, which also serve as to meet the teaching and research needs of both undergraduate and post-graduate programmes.

#### ***Evaluation of teachers by students***

The Department solicits students' feedback on every aspect of the educational process through the electronic evaluation system of teachers and courses in collaboration with MODIP-PADA. The overall data of all the courses of each semester are made available to the teachers of the Department, through the information system of MODIP-PADA ([https://modip.uniwa.gr/statistika/sygkentrotika-statistika-apotelesmata-ana-tmima-ak-etoys\\_-2020-2021/tmima-fysikotherapeias-cheim/](https://modip.uniwa.gr/statistika/sygkentrotika-statistika-apotelesmata-ana-tmima-ak-etoys_-2020-2021/tmima-fysikotherapeias-cheim/)). Teachers take into consideration the results for their self-improvement. In addition, the evaluation of the teachers is taken into consideration by members of DEP. in the Department, in accordance with current legislation. The results of the course and teacher evaluations are examined by the President of the Department and the Coordinator of the OMEA in accordance with decisions made by the Senate.

Finally, the overall results of the electronic evaluation from courses and teachers are presented at a meeting of the Department's Assembly. During this meeting, teachers have

the opportunity to discuss issues and good practices related to the teaching of subjects assigned to them and in their area of expertise.

## II. Analysis

The Department follows legal procedures in place for recruiting highly qualified academic staff and candidates. Although the Department provides opportunities for professional development, it does not have an established pedagogical training for members of DEP. The teaching competence is only relied upon the doctoral qualification and the experience of members of DEP. Similarly, there is no established pedagogical training for the clinical supervisors in the Internship programme.

## III. Conclusions

The Department has academically qualified, competent, and experienced members of DEP to ensure that teaching is sufficiently linked to research within the programme. However, there is no formal pedagogic training to ensure the continuous development of the teaching skills of members of DEP.

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

It is recommended that the Department offer formal pedagogical training to new and old members of DEP to ensure teaching competence beyond the doctoral degree qualification. Continuous development of teaching skills about new and novel teaching methodologies should be expected for all teaching and staff.

## 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 counseling 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

### I. Findings

The Department has specialised facilities to sustain the programme and its mission as an academic and clinical training programme, however, more space is needed given the size of the student body.

The EEAP visited each classroom during the site visit and noted that classrooms are equipped with at least one personal computer with Internet access. The Department's infrastructure includes: two classrooms for the programme's exclusive use located on the Aegaleo Park Campus; four classrooms and two shared auditoriums located on both the Aegaleo Park & Ancient Olive Grove campuses. Five laboratory rooms are equipped for teaching laboratory courses. The laboratory rooms are located in the K-7 building of the Aegaleo Campus and house the corresponding laboratory equipment. The Department has the infrastructure and resources for student learning, as well as facilities for enabling students to access classes and laboratory-based work and professional development through the use of the libraries,

research and teaching laboratories. As noted in the IQAS' accreditation report (IQAS, p. 12), the University undertook the initiative to equip all its members with laptops to accommodate remote instruction from home during the pandemic.

There is an adequate range of support services available to the students like career counselling, the student welfare office, sport/cultural facilities, libraries, liaison office, sport office, etc., with the exception of dormitories. The University does not have its own dormitories, but plans to construct them in a new building.

There are services available for students with learning difficulties and other disabilities, such as Academic Support (Access to the Libraries, Departmental Counsellors, Access to UNIWA campuses, Access to e-learning content, including Support Grands, Psychosocial Support, Occupational therapy, Physiotherapy, Sports and Physical Activity. All services are accessible to students and are posted on the Department's and University's websites. Administrative services are offered to the students for the duration of their studies, especially distant-learning. The administration and staff communicate electronically using email and courier services.

The University has an online secretariat to assist students' request submitted online. There are three (administrative staff in the Department.

## **II. Analysis**

The University has operating funds and procedures for regularly scheduled maintenance of the campuses, teaching rooms, amphitheatres, laboratories, equipment, and other services. The buildings and campus infrastructures appear to be well-maintained, clean and allow students and staff to function in a safe environment.

The existing facilities along with the addition of the new building are deemed adequate to sustain and maintain the Department of Physiotherapy's operations, providing that the admission of new students is controlled.

The University provided faculty and staff with laptops as a means to provide uninterrupted service to the students and faculty during the COVID-19 quarantine.

The students appear to be adequately informed, especially among first-year students during the welcome ceremony. Academic advisors also keep students informed and are in constant communication with them.

All services are functional and easily accessible. Additionally, the project "Prosvasi" aims to support the students at the University who may be subject to inequities and challenges since they cannot participate in academic activities adequately to complete their studies in a timely manner, such as students with learning difficulties/disabilities, from under-represented groups or low socioeconomic backgrounds. The University's and Department's websites are accessible through the WCAG2 protocol for students with disability.



### III. Conclusions

It is evident that the University is supportive of the new curriculum and the Department of Physiotherapy and its operations. Funding is provided to help the Department deliver its mission as an educational and training programme.

It is the EEAP's opinion that University is committed to the success and growth of the Department, its faculty, staff, and administration. The University provided all members in the Department with laptops so that students do not experience interrupted service during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The on-going construction of the new building in two years, as well as the implementation of the fourth campus in the Moschato location, will fully complement and cover the future educational needs of the Department and students pursuing a degree in physiotherapy.

#### Panel Judgement

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

#### Panel Recommendations

- At this time, the University does not have residence halls (dormitories) to provide boarding for undergraduate students who want to live on or closer to campus. There are only a small number of rooms available for student housing at other universities nearby. Resident halls (dormitories) are urgently needed to house and board students on campus.
- Laboratory equipment and facilities need to be upgraded.

## **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**

#### **I. Findings**

The Department uses an electronic information management system developed by MODIP to access questionnaires, evaluation forms, class material, students' grades, statistical data among other electronic resources and data.

The QAU is responsible for evaluating the Department annually. A variety of outcome data are collected and analysed for MODIP's internal evaluation of the Department annually. Based on MODIP's feedback, the Department is able to monitor and revise its mission, goals, and strategic plans to ensure continual improvement and quality upgrades.

OMEA organises the electronic information system for students to evaluate courses and faculty between the 8<sup>th</sup> to 11<sup>th</sup> week of each semester using questionnaires, interviews, group discussions (B1, pp. 41-42). Students are informed when the course evaluation period is open online and are encouraged to submit their feedback in a timely manner. OMEA tries to maximise student participation in the evaluation process. Both students and teachers, through their personal accounts, have access to an e-Study platform that provides electronic data information regarding students' classes, grades and certificates, as well as professors' teaching programs and grading.

OMEA shares student, faculty and staff feedback in writing with the Departmental Assembly and minutes from their meetings are recorded. OMEA submits the minutes from the meeting along with their written report to the university and MODIP no later than one month after its meeting with the Departmental Assembly. MODIP includes these findings in their internal evaluation report of the physiotherapy department.

In addition, the faculty, staff, students, and administrators make use of University and MODIP tools to record research projects and evaluations of the University projects. Other digital tools and platforms are also accessible on the University's website to gather petitions for use of technical equipment, request personal leaves of absence, managing boarding of students, administrative services and financial aid, and an online class management platform that provides the students with critical information about the structure and material of classes as well as their grades. The online class management system for the open e-Class is also accessible on the Department's and University websites. The Department offers online access to statistical reports about career paths and professional opportunities in Greece and abroad.

The EEAP was provided a set of Quality Indicators for the undergraduate programme in physiotherapy that lists the composition of the student profiles among other variables for three academic years (2018-2019, 2019-2020, 2020-2021). Of note is that 49.8% among the newly admitted students in the physiotherapy programme during the 2021-2022 year were female. For the same academic year, approximately 52% of graduates were women among the total number of graduates with n+1 years of study (D4.39). On the other hand, the percentage of students with disabilities among all enrolled students during the 2018-2019, 2019-2020, and 2021-2022 year is 0% (D4.27-22). The ratio of the number of <sup>[[1]]</sup>students who withdrew from the programme per 1000 enrolled students was 21.49 and 18.89 for the 2020-2021 and 2018-2019 academic years, respectively (D4.26-22).

## **II. Analysis**

The University and Department have a number of processes, procedures and safeguards to collect, analyse data and solicit feedback from students and professors. The data collected by the digital information management system helps to streamline the process and regulate the allocation of benefits, supplies, equipment, the accessibility of data collected by MODIP and other institutional offices, and to implement continual improvements. A respectable number of students participate in the evaluation process at the end of the semester. There is clearly a process in place for synthesising and sharing data among relevant administrators, faculty, and the monitoring regulatory groups. The University, Department, MODIP, OMEA, faculty, and students have access to outcome data with which continual changes can be implemented in the curriculum, to improve services for students and provide feedback to faculty based on students' evaluation of courses.

An analysis of the data reported on the Quality Indicators for the past three academic years are informative. For example, the ratio of the number of students who withdrew from the programme per 1000 enrolled students is approximately 20% over the past two years. Moreover, the percentage of students with disabilities among all enrolled students during the 2019-2020 and 2021-2022 year is 0%. It is not clear why students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities are not identified or do not self-report.

### III. Conclusion

The Department has access to current technologies and the information management system to analyse and synthesise a plethora of data. With the assistance of OMEA, MODIP, the Faculty Assembly, administrators, faculty, staff, stakeholders, and students, the Department has the means to closely study outcome data across several variables. As a result, modifications can be implemented to continually revise the curriculum, improve teaching instruction, assessment procedures, and better serve students with unique needs and profiles.

#### Panel Judgement

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

#### Panel Recommendations

- It is recommended that the Department survey students, faculty, stakeholders, off-campus supervisors, and administrators at the end of each semester, and perhaps more frequently as a means to continually improve the curriculum, revise or implement new processes and procedures that are focused on student-centred approaches.
- It is recommended that the Department study and identify why students with disabilities and learning difficulties do not self-report or are not identified by faculty and staff during or after the admissions process. Similarly, procedures and practices should be implemented to provide the appropriate accommodations needed by students who are academically challenged due to learning difficulties, disabilities, have different learning styles, or have emotional behavioral problems (in light of the recent impact of the COVID-19 pandemic) to ensure their successful completion of the programme in a timely manner.
- It is also suggested that students who withdraw from the programme and University also be consulted to determine reasons for their withdrawal and to identify the types of supports they needed to remain enrolled in University and/or the Department to complete their studies.

## **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*

### **I. Findings**

After the launch of the new undergraduate programme, a new website was created to supply students with a means to access the curriculum and other administrative platforms. A bilingual version of the website exists, therefore students, professors and the general public have access to information on the University and the Department in both in Greek and English. The Department's website also contains links that redirect students to a number of other webpages, (e.g., Panhellenic Physiotherapists' Association).

The website is easily accessible, user friendly and provides the user with a great variety of information. According to student report during the site visit, the most frequently used tools that student's access are the e-Study and e-Class platforms, Eudoxus platform, the electronic library search engines, and email.

There is a segment on the Department's dedicated website for posting important announcements and news, as well as a different segment dedicated solely to upcoming conferences and events. The Department's contact information, including the location of the facilities and the administrative assistants' office hours, are online. The structure of each class module is posted on the Department's website for students to register for classes and select elective courses. The quality assurance policy is also posted on the website.

Available online are forms and templates for a number of petitions and uses that are deemed to be invaluable to both students and professors alike. The faculty and staff CVs are posted on the Department's website including sections dedicated to current and former research projects realised by the students, faculty, staff, and associates of the University.

The Departments' website has a specific section with material related to pursuing careers, the professional rights of a physiotherapist, as well as post-graduate programmes. Students can also schedule an appointment with a career counsellor online.

## II. Analysis

The Department's website is current, accurate, easy to access and navigate. It contains an impressive amount and a wide variety of resources and data that are well-organised into distinct sections to alleviate confusion and challenges navigating the University's and Department's websites. The study guide offers valuable information about the curriculum and Departmental and University policies.

An added feature is that the University's and Department's website are available in both Greek and English, which corresponds with universal standards. The bilingual website is accessible to students, faculty, the general public, and prospective participants for the ERASMUS programme. The website has a list of faculty, administrative staff, as well as counsellors that enables students easy access and a streamlined process for contacting University and Departmental representatives. The website does not include schedules for the public transportation system to and from the University.

## III. Conclusion

The website corresponds to the standards of a higher education programme and is well-organised and informative. Although the Department's website has information about the physiotherapy programme translated into English, pages that are available in English include links to webpages and sites that are in only Greek (e.g. New Methods in Physiotherapy, collaborative teaching staff). Although the University's, Department's, and student hand guide include maps of the campuses, schedules for the public transportation system to and from the University or the bus schedule to access the metro station located nearby the University are not included. Some links to information related to the post-graduate and post-doctoral research programmes on the Department's home page in English have broken links. Information about the Lanescasm laboratory linked to the Department's main page is only in Greek (<https://lanecasm.uniwa.gr>) and does not include an English version consistent with the other two research laboratories.

### Panel Judgement

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

### **Panel Recommendations**

- It is recommended that the website include the schedule of the public transportation system to and from the University, such as the bus schedule to access the metro station located nearby the University.
- It is recommended that the Department repair broken links on their website, especially related to the post-graduate programmes and the Lanescasm research laboratory.

## 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

#### I. Findings

MODIP is instrumental in evaluating the Department annually and has a dedicated webpage on the University's website on which their mission, responsibilities and outcome data are reported. MODIP played a significant role in overseeing the reform and implementation of the new curriculum in the Department of Physiotherapy and has conducted periodic evaluation of the new programme since its inception (2018). In 2021, members of MODIP unanimously approved the proposal for certification of the new undergraduate physiotherapy curriculum as it was judged to be in accordance with national and the EU's academic and training requirements for physiotherapists (e.g. E0AAE, WCPT) (B1, B2, B15).

#### II. Analysis

MODIP'S internal evaluation in 2021 outlined a number of positive findings and limitations. Limitations included variables related to the large number of students enrolled in the programme, insufficient infrastructure, such as laboratory space, equipment, training areas, the small number of permanent and full-time faculty to manage a student body of 1104 students, lack of participation among students and faculty in the ERASMUS programme, inadequate training of staff, administrative red-tape that hinders the efficiency of the Department's operations, and lack of incentives for faculty growth and productivity. Greater



digitalisation was recommended by MODIP of Department’s operations and general communication between members of the Department’s secretariat, educational staff, students, and faculty (B15).

### III. Conclusions

MODIP’s information and data recording system enable the president of the Department, the OMEA coordinator, and faculty to access to the results of the electronic evaluations since the 2011-2012 academic year to the present date. The Department and faculty have access to a variety of outcome data with which they can study areas of strength and those that need improvement. As a result, the Department is able to implement changes to improve the curriculum, the Department’s strategic plan, teaching pedagogies, and the evaluation of students’ performance in courses.

The Department has implemented many of the recommendations outlined in MODIP’s 2021 internal evaluation report regarding incorporating student-centred teaching and life-long learning approaches in the programme’s curriculum. Based on an analysis of individual course modules (syllabi) listed by year and semester, approximately a third of the 42 required courses base students final grade on one final exam (B12). Student feedback is submitted electronically and anonymously. The Department has outlined strategic plans and targets they want to achieve in their four-year business and strategic plans pertaining to increasing students’ response rates for course and faculty evaluations.

#### Panel Judgement

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

#### Panel Recommendations

- Some of the Department’s limitations identified in MODIP’s 2021 internal evaluation report are beyond those that the Department can implement with respect to the large number of students enrolled in the programme annually, insufficient infrastructure (e.g., laboratory space and clinical training areas), and the small number of permanent and full-time faculty to manage a student body of 1104 currently enrolled in the programme.
- It is suggested that student participation in course evaluations be made a priority. Although the current system for students to evaluate courses is electronic, anonymous, and announced in advance during the semester, the current system has not proven to be successful in soliciting broad feedback from a number of stakeholders, administrators, alumni, etc. It is suggested that the Department and OMEA re-evaluate the mechanisms for soliciting student, faculty, administrator, and stakeholder feedback.

## **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**

#### **I. Findings**

The only external evaluation conducted by the HQA was of the old curriculum in physiotherapy when the Department was part of the TEI in Athens, which was completed in June 2012. However, it is important to note that the Department's curriculum has been revised since their merger with the University in 2018-2019 so that it was in compliance with academic and minimal entry-level clinical competencies for physiotherapists set by national and the European agencies (e.g. EΘAAE, WCPT, etc.).

According to the EEAP's evaluation (2012) of the old physiotherapy programme, the curriculum was reported to be comparable with international standards as expected for undergraduate programmes in physiotherapy according to the Bologna Agreement. The philosophy and structure of knowledge of the old curriculum was found to be up-to-date, coherent, functional, and logically organised. The EEAP (2021) reported that the old curriculum had an increased focus in physiotherapy conditions related to musculoskeletal disorders compared to neurological and cardiopulmonary disorders and recommended a greater balance between these two content areas. The inclusion of a dedicated course in movement analysis was also recommended at that time. The EEAP (2012) found that the old curriculum in physiotherapy at former TEI met the department's predefined goals with the exception of course objectives related to the field of electrotherapy. Since the undergraduate curriculum was reported to be operational and in compliance with national and European standards for physiotherapists at the Bachelors level (with the exception of coursework in electrotherapy), the EEAP recommended that the department at the former programme implement post-graduate coursework leading to Master's and doctoral degrees.

The EEAP's assessment a decade ago also found that the old curriculum included assessment procedures with active participation of students, such as tutorials, case study presentations, and other activities, etc. Students' final grades in courses were predominantly based on one final examination at the end of the semester at that time. Faculty-student ratios were high for theoretical courses (~1:50) and laboratory courses (~1:25). Administrative support, dedicated laboratories, classrooms, and laboratory equipment were inadequate. An electronic system to upload dissertations and other student assignments were not available at TEI at that time but were in progress.

Student access to laboratories outside of scheduled classes and laboratory courses was also limitation of the old curriculum at TEI Athens in 2012. Continual faculty and staff training in new and effective teaching pedagogies were also lacking at time. Improving students' response to course evaluations was recommended along with strategic plan with specific objectives to increase faculty research productivity.

## **II. Analysis**

Since the merger of the former TEI programme with the Department of Physiotherapy at the University of West Attica during the 2018-2019 academic years, many improvements have been implemented. For one, the Department is now housed in an HEI, which better positions the programme to excel in academic instruction and research. The Department's infrastructure on the Egaleo Park campus includes dedicated classrooms, laboratories with equipment and infrastructure for teaching laboratory courses. Three out of five laboratories are research laboratories (Neuromuscular and Cardiovascular Movement Study Laboratory, Musculoskeletal Physiotherapy Laboratory, Advanced Physiotherapy Laboratory). The Department self-finances and manages the three laboratories through competitive and/or the Lifelong Learning programmes (KEΔIBIM). The Department has access to two auditoriums which are located on its current and the Ancient Olive Grove campuses. The offices of the Department's administration, faculty, special and research teaching staff (EDIP, DEP, respectively) are all centralised on campus.

The old curriculum at TEI included mostly formal face-to-face instruction (e.g., lectures, seminars, guest speakers); however, the revised curriculum in physiotherapy at West Attica reports that it includes student-centred teaching approaches and life-long learning pedagogies (B12). Course descriptions list the knowledge and skills to be acquired in each course (B12, 12\_APXH 12.pptx). The Department's revised curriculum is in compliance with national (ΕΘΑΑΕ) and required curricula, including minimal practical competencies for entry-level physiotherapist in the EU (B6). The Department implemented post-graduate programmes leading to Master's and doctoral degrees, and post-doctoral studies.

Based on a closer analysis of individual course syllabi listed by year and semester (B12), approximately 27% of the 42 required courses only base students' final grade on one exam. Students' performance in other courses are weighted based on a variety of requirements, assignments, and activities. Students' response to the course evaluations at the end of the semester has improved.

The number of permanent faculty has marginally increased to 17 in comparison to the number of faculty at former TEI physiotherapy programme (14 faculty) in 2012. In addition, 34 temporary teaching faculty and doctoral students help supplement and sustain the teaching, clinical training and mentoring of undergraduates in physiotherapy. The faculty-student ratios are still significantly high for theoretical and laboratory coursework (e.g., 1:72 to 1:50). The post-graduate Level 7 and Level 8 programmes are fully operational. The

Department currently has 22 doctoral students enrolled of which 12 have assigned teaching responsibilities. The Master's and doctoral programmes and post-doctoral studies have well-defined research foci.

An impressive number of faculty are currently active in research and service to their profession, Department, University, among other professional and administration committee work. Faculty are successful in obtaining internal and external research funding to support educational training, research initiatives and empirical investigations. Faculty have active research collaborations with scientists at other universities in the EU. Faculty publications and research activities are accessible through major search engines.

With respect to coursework found to be lacking by the EEAP (2012) during their evaluation of the old physiotherapy programme at TEI, the new curriculum in physiotherapy at West Attica includes a comprehensive and well-organised curriculum that meets WCPT minimal entry-level coursework and competencies.

### **III. Conclusions**

MODIP found the IQA objectives are consistent with the University's strategic plans, which align with expected institutional and national standards (B25, B32\_1). MODIP's quality assurance policies and procedures are well-organised and clearly outlined based on the evaluation certification committee (EEAP). MODIP (IQA) assessment revealed that six of the eight principles were fully compliant and two were either compliant or satisfactory.

With respect to the EEAP's (2012) assessment of the physiotherapy department at the former TEI, the current Department of Physiotherapy has not adequately addressed or implemented some of the recommendations suggested 10 years ago. These recommendations were also identified and outlined by MODIP and the external certification committee more recently in 2022. For example, one principle found to be compliant, but not fully satisfactory by MODIP and the external certification committee pertains to the allocation and management of resources for decreasing faculty-student ratios, improving infrastructure, and mentoring faculty and staff. MODIP recommended that mentoring and training of new faculty should include the assistance of the Office of Learning and Teaching, which was established by MODIP and financed the ΕΣΠΑ programme.

Additional recommendations provided by MODIP and the EEAP (2012) include implementing mechanisms to solicit quality feedback beyond just student course evaluations so that the Department can continuously improve the curriculum in physiotherapy, administrative services, and the teaching effectiveness of faculty. Greater involvement of off-campus supervisors/stakeholders for not only soliciting their feedback regularly regarding the effective operation of the off-campus practica and internship programmes, but for providing stakeholders continuing education opportunities to keep them abreast and trained in current scientific developments and clinical procedures.

Another recommendation provided by MODIP and the external certification committee (2022) pertains to establishing Departmental criteria and procedures for allocating resources for research to faculty and staff. Areas found to be satisfactory, but need improvement pertain to the organisation of the strategic plan and key performance indicators related to human resources and management.

## Panel Judgement

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

## Panel Recommendations

- The EEAP recommends that the Department of Physiotherapy with the assistance of OMEA re-evaluate the mechanisms and tools they utilise to solicit continuous feedback from students.
- The Department should establish criteria for allocating resources to faculty for research, faculty development in contemporary teaching pedagogies, and spinning off new initiatives and collaborations nationally and abroad. Procedures are recommended for implementing the process.
- Mentoring and training of new faculty is strongly recommended, especially using existing resources available to the Department through the Office of Learning and Teaching established by MODIP and financed through ΕΣΠΑ programmes.
- It is strongly recommended that the Department work with the University and other governing national bodies to increase the number of dedicated spaces for laboratories, classrooms, lecture halls, and offices, and workspaces for faculty, student, staff, and administration, if these measures are currently not in progress. In addition, it is strongly recommended that existing and new spaces be upgraded and equipment in laboratories be updated to include basic and essential technologies so that graduates in physiotherapy are better prepared to enter the workforce in the country and abroad.
- It is strongly recommended that the Department work with the University, the Ministry of Education, and other governing bodies in the state to increase the number of permanent faculty and staff in the Department. Sustaining and maintaining the Department's ranking and excellence in teaching and training of undergraduates in physiotherapy requires that the faculty-student ratio be significantly decreased to a more manageable level. In addition, an enrolment of >1000 registered students, not including mentoring Master's, Doctoral, and post-doctoral fellows pursuing post-graduate studies, significantly impacts faculty and staff teaching and research productivity, mobility, and collaborations with other international institutions.
- It is recommended that the Department address MODIP's recommendation pertaining to the organisation of their strategic plan and KPIs related to human resources and management.

## **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**

#### **I. Findings**

MODIP has outlined very well the progress, transition, and completion of the degree from the pre-existing physiotherapy programmes to the Department of Physiotherapy at the University of West Attica (Annex B32\_1). According to detailed information in MODIP's progress report, there is a provision in place for the progression of students who were formally enrolled in the pre-existing study programme at TEI who wish to continue their studies in the new study programme at West Attica (B32\_1 – B32\_4).

#### **II. Analysis**

Internships continue to be implemented seamlessly in the new curriculum for both TEI and new students enrolled in the Department. Provisions have been made for both student cohorts who either continued in the new curriculum and for students who chose to complete

their degree requirements under the pre-existing TEI curriculum (Annexes B32\_2, B32\_4). The Founding Law of the University of West Attica (unlike the former TEI programme) devised a provision for pairing courses rather than parallel implementation of both curricula. These decisions are outlined in the President's document.

Of concern is the backlog of 125 students who chose to follow the former TEI programme's curriculum to complete their degree programme (through pairing of courses) and by the compulsory deadline by 2025. The transition from the former TEI programme in physiotherapy to the new programme at the University has been smooth and seamless.

### III. Conclusions

The University and Department have successfully implemented all the necessary provisions and procedures for the successful transition from the former programme to the new physiotherapy programme at West Attica.

#### Panel Judgement

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

#### Panel Recommendations

None.

## **PART C: CONCLUSIONS**

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

- The new curriculum in physiotherapy is extremely well-organised and includes theoretical and scientific coursework that is in compliance with national and European reforms, standards, and competencies. The transition from the old curriculum to the new curriculum at the University was streamlined and flawless.
- Departmental and institutional quality assurance policies are well-structured and outline detailed strategic objectives that are consistent with the institutional objectives.
- Systems are in place for continual evaluation of the Department, students, and courses. Procedures are in place for students to self-advocate and file complaints.
- The curriculum includes coursework that fosters student-centred and lifelong learning, such as tutorials, portfolios, problem solving/critical thinking, systematic reviews, case studies, synchronous-asynchronous teaching assignments and activities (B12).
- The majority of courses base students' final grade on a variety of activities (B12).
- There is mutual respect among students, academic and specialty teaching staff.
- Faculty are productive in research, high-impact publications, securing grants.
- The Department's post-graduate programmes are fully operational.

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

- The SWOT analysis lacks objective empirical data regarding growth and unemployment rates.
- KPIs do not include objectives and procedures to assess the teaching effectiveness of faculty, staff and stakeholders using advanced pedagogical techniques. Targeting of student learning outcomes does not interconnect learning target outcomes, to student learning actions and student assessments.
- There are no specific guidelines for modifying courses based on student feedback. A process for self- or peer-evaluation of teaching faculty, staff, including target setting and compliance monitoring courses is lacking.
- Formal training of faculty and staff in student-centred pedagogies is also lacking.
- The process and procedures for students to file complaints needs more objectivity and independent mediation and resolution processes.
- Course modules do not all include Learning Outcomes that align well with course content and assessment activities. Grading systems need to explicitly link the learning criteria to in each course to level of skill acquisition, mastery course assignments, activities are lacking. Uses of rubrics are recommended.
- There is a need to establish and implement well-defined criteria for assessing faculty-staff, off-campus stakeholders, and the curriculum for its quality.
- Procedures for identifying students with learning difficulties/disabilities are lacking.

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

- The new curriculum's course modules should be better organised and streamlined for consistency. All course modules should include learning outcomes that align with the Departments' objectives, Course content and assessment activities. Grading systems need to explicitly link the learning criteria per course to level of skill acquisition, completion or mastery of a variety of course assignments and activities.



- Specific guidelines are necessary for modifying courses based on student, OMEA, Department Assembly, and MODIP feedback. Self- or peer-evaluation of teaching faculty, staff is recommended. Target setting and compliance monitoring should be implemented.
- Formal training of faculty, staff and stakeholders in student-centred learning should be implemented.
- Continual improvement of the curriculum should include faculty, staff, off-campus stakeholders', and administrators' feedback. Feedback should directly lead to improvements by specific timelines.
- KPIs need to be revised to include objectives and procedures to assess teaching effectiveness of faculty and clinical staff using advanced pedagogical techniques.
- The SWOT analysis should include objective empirical workforce data and market analyses.
- Greater digitalisation is needed to process, record and archive data.
- Course modules focused on digital literacy are necessary to address competencies outlined by WCPT.
- Undergraduates should be required to complete empirical research for the thesis requirement. Systematic reviews should include empirical and scientific analyses (e.g., meta-analysis).
- Consultation and academic advising with the Academic Advisor should be a mandatory.
- The student complaint system and procedures need to be revised and more objective.

#### IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: **1, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 12.**

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **2, 4, 6, and 11.**

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>X</b> |
| Substantially compliant |          |
| Partially compliant     |          |
| Non-compliant           |          |

## The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname

Signature

- 1. Dr. Mary Andrianopoulos (Chair)**  
Professor, University of Massachusetts, Amherst, Massachusetts, United States of America
- 2. Dr. Stefanos Volianitis**  
Associate Professor, Qatar University, Doha, Qatar
- 3. Dr. George Panayiotou**  
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- 4. Mr. Stavros Stathopoulos**  
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