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

Αριστείδου 1 & Ευριπίδου 2 • 10559 Αθήνα | 1 Aristidou str. & 2 Evripidou str. • 10559 Athens, Greece
T. +30 210 9220 944 • **F.** +30 210 9220 143 • **E.** secretariat@ethaae.gr • www.ethaae.gr

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

Graphic Design and Visual Communication

Institution: University of West Attica

Date: 24/02-01/03/2025



Με τη συγχρηματοδότηση
της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης



Πρόγραμμα
Ανθρώπινο Δυναμικό και
Κοινωνική Συνοχή

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Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of
the New Undergraduate Study Programme in operation of **Graphic
Design and Visual Communication** 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 **Graphic Design and Visual Communication** of the **University of West Attica** comprised the following four (4) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

1. Dr Stella Baraklianou, (Chair)
University of Huddersfield
2. Associate Professor Natassa Economidou-Stavrou
University of Nicosia, Cyprus
3. Associate Professor Evangelia Kordoni
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Germany
4. Mr Angelos Michail Chouvardas
Phd Candidate, Greece

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

In preparation for the visit, the Panel reviewed the list of material provided by the Hellenic Authority of Higher Education (HAHE) via the Cloud digital folder. Theory and History of Art, at the School of Fine Art, Athens which included background information and guidance on the accreditation process, detailed material and data related to the programme under evaluation, such as the programme accreditation proposal and associated appendices.

The programme review was conducted remotely, via teleconference, organised and coordinated by the Department of Graphic Design, Visual Communication within the School of Applied Arts and Culture at the University of West Attica.

The schedule and agenda of the review were as stated below.

Monday, 24/02/2025:

- a) Preliminary private meeting of the EEAP. Discussion of the programme under review; assignment of writing parts of the accreditation report draft to the members of the EEAP.
- b) Welcome meeting and overview with the Vice Rector and President of MODIP, Professor Stavros Kaminaris and the Director of the Department of Graphic Design and Visual Communication, Associate Professor Apostolos Papapostolou. The first meeting provided the Panel with a short overview of the Department within the newly founded University of West Attica, whilst the Vice Rector described the historical trajectory of the previous Programmed before the amalgamation of the Programmes into the University of West Attica and the School of Applied Arts.

Meeting with members of the EEAP and respective staff and members of the School's OMEA & MODIP. In attendance: Vice Rector Professor Stavros Kaminaris, Professor Vassiliki Belessi, President of OMEA, Professor Sofia Strati, member of OMEA, Associate Professor Spyros Siakas and member of OMEA, Associate Professor Vangelis Hatzitheodorou member of OMEA, Assistant Professor Dimitris Christidis member of OMEA, Lecturer Ourania Efstathiadou, member of OMEA as Administrative Head of MODIP, Dr Marisa Sigala.

We discussed the overall strategic aims and objectives of the Department within the wider School of Applied Arts, the transition of the former two pathways of the TEI that have been amalgamated into one new Department, as well matters related to strategic goal setting and Quality Assurance Policy, the Programme specification and Module outlines as well as annual intake of students.

- c) The first day of meetings was followed by a de-briefing meeting between the EEAP members to discuss first impressions and points for further in-depth discussion.

Tuesday, 25/02/2025:

- a) Meeting and discussion with academic teaching staff of undergraduate programme. In attendance were: Professor Eleni Mouri, Professor Stamatina Theohari, Associate Professor Rossetos Metzitakos, Assistant Professor Sofia Mytilinaiou, Assistant Professor Martha Tsiara, Lecturer Antigoni Karamani and member of EDIP Giorgos Korakakis.

The EEAP and staff discussed the current structure of the undergraduate programme, teaching hours and load, the emphasis on workshop-led learning, learning outcomes and aims within the two different pathways, research

activities as well as the provisions of post-graduate Masters, in Animation and Graphic

- b) Meeting and discussion with nine current undergraduate students, the students are currently enrolled on the 5th or above semester, including students that transitioned from the previous TEI programme and are currently enrolled in a 19th semester of studies.
 - c) Online tour of classrooms and facilities: the Panel had the opportunity to view remotely the teaching classrooms and facilities, including workshops and laboratories. It must be noted that the extensive and in-depth online tour organised by Professor Rossetos Metzidakos was well received, as the Panel had no other means to ascertain the facilities given the remote nature of the Accreditation procedure.
 - d) Meeting and discussion with external social partners and stakeholders, including private and public organisations. In attendance were Mr Avgerinos Chatzichrysos, Forlabels, Mr Giorgos Vlachos, from the Museum of Typography and Graphic Arts Technology, Mr Aris Fatouros, Hellenic Parliament TV, Ms Artemis Potamianou, Platform Projects, Athens, Mr Vassilis Karamitsanis, Animasyros, Mr Giorgos Papakonstantinou, The National Mint (IETA), Mr Dimitris Koliadimas, Semiotic Design Agency, Mr Kostas Kakarountas, ASIFA Hellas and Mr Manos Gerogiannis of Odd Bleat. The Panel was informed of the involvement of the stakeholders and the professional careers of graduates of the Department, including Odd Bleat and Dimitris Koliadimas's Semiotic Agency.
 - e) Private debriefing meeting (EEAP members only): discussion of the outcomes and findings of the meetings.
 - f) Closing meeting with the Vice-Rector and President of MODIP, Professor Stavros Kaminaris and the Director of the Department of Graphic Design and Visual Communication, Associate Professor Apostolos Papapostolou., In attendance also members of the OMEA and MODIP, Professor Vassiliki Belessi, President of OMEA, Professor Sofia Strati, Associate Professor Spyros Siakas, Associate Professor Vangelis Hatzitheodorou, Assistant Professor Dimitris Christidis, Lecturer Ourania Efstathiadou and Administrative Head of MODIP, Dr Marisa Sigala.
- Informal discussion and feedback of the key EEAP findings and opportunities for the Department to provide feedback and further clarifications.

Wednesday 26/02/2025 to Tuesday 04/03/2024:

Draft report writing. EEAP virtual meetings. Review and finalisation of draft report.

Throughout the evaluation process, the Panel was in close communication with the University's Vice Rector and staff members of MODIP, who provided extra documentation and relevant information as requested by the Panel. The Panel found the Department well prepared and with the assistance of OMEA and MODIP representatives, teaching staff, student representatives and administrative support, facilitated the smooth running of the accreditation process.

III. New Undergraduate Study Programme in operation Profile

The Department of Graphic Design and Visual Communication, within the School of Applied Arts and Culture at the University of West Attica, is the result of the combination of the two previous departments of TEI, those of Graphic Design and Technology of Graphic Arts. The Programme pre-existed within the TEI, since 1983, and was amalgamated under the Athena plan in 2013 for the upgrading of previous technological institutes into Higher Education University providers. As a result, in 2018 the Department became part of the School of Applied Arts of the University of West Attica, according to the Presidential Decree of N.4521/2018.

The Department offers an educational degree (BA) that is offered within a four-year academic programme, structured around eight academic semesters. It aims at providing training for students who wish to pursue a career in the fields of Graphic Design and Visual Communication. The Programme adheres to international and European Standards for pursuit of studies within the relevant fields of Arts and Humanities, Graphic Design, Multimedia, audio visual techniques and media production, digital publishing and multimedia.

The educational aims of the Programme are to:

- I. Provide high quality courses in theoretical studies and in art & technology seminars.
- II. Keep abreast of the advancing scientific developments and by readjusting the coursework accordingly.
- III. Ensure that each graduate has acquired a sound scientific foundation, creative artistic perspective and high technical skills, which can be used successfully for a professional career in the many fields of the Visual Communication industry.
- IV. Disseminate knowledge and prepare the students to pursue successfully post-graduate studies in Greek institutions or abroad.

The course provides for two pathways, that of Graphic Design and Graphic Design and Technology. It is the only one of its kind in Greece at the moment that offers undergraduate, postgraduate and research options for those who wish to study Graphic Design.

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.

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The Department of Graphic Design and Visual Communication was established as a new Department offering University degree courses in 2018. The Department offers an educational degree (BA) of a four-year academic programme, structured around eight academic semesters. The overall study programme reflects 240 ECTS credits, equivalent to Level 6. Upon completion, the student is awarded a Degree (Ptychio) with the title of Graphic Design and Visual Communication.

The Department has a well-established mission that adheres to international and European Standards for pursuit of studies within the wider fields of Arts and Humanities, recognised under the broader field of Arts (021), and specifically, in more detail as Audio visual techniques and media production (0211) and Graphic Design, Multimedia (0688) as well as Digital publishing and Multimedia (0619). These reflect and are according to the international categorisation of established scientific fields in education by UNESCO (ISCED 2013).

The Quality Assurance Document (proposal) of the Department, Institutional Strategy for the academic development of the Department, dated 24/03/2022. This document contains in detail the institutional, economical, developmental and social reasons for the proposed area of study. The Quality Assurance Document contains research and analysis, demonstrating the need in the current market for the supply of highly qualified graduates in the field of Graphic Design and Visual Communication. Given the extensive development of new technologies especially in the fields of Visual Communication, Marketing and branding, the pursuit of studies in this field makes it a highly desirable career path.

The feasibility of the strategic planning has been captured in a five-year projected plan. In this, the Department outlines how it has responded to the needs of the national and regional economy, based on the analysis of similar and comparable educational courses offered by other European and international Universities, including some in Asia, for example Graphic Communication, Graphic Design and Typography, Branding and Identity as well courses in Chemical and Paper Engineering.

The Department outlines the sustainability of the new programme as outlined in the Quality Assurance Proposal of 24/03/2022. Specifically, it highlights the need for more

permanent academic teaching staff, on top of the existing 31 members (tenure and non-tenured) as in the projected five years the Department will see a substantial number of staff retiring. This is an increasing threat (SWOT analysis) to the Department and the already pressing need for the hiring of additional members of the teaching staff. These include the need to hire (3) members of staff for Graphic Design, (1) Animation and Moving Images and (3) in Graphic Design and Technology. On top of this there is a number of technical staff, in total 7.

The admission number of incoming students is around 100-120 each academic year.

There are options for students who wish to continue to post-graduate studies, namely the MA in Animation, which is very popular route as well as MA Intelligent Packaging, which is currently suspended and not accepting students. The Department also offers options for those who wish to pursue PHD studies, indeed there are currently 30 students studying at this level.

In terms of infrastructure, the Department is housed within the wider University campus of the University of West Attica at Aigaleo, in Attica and has two dedicated buildings that house the lecture theatres, specialist laboratories and workshops for Graphic Design as well as Graphic Design and Technology (offset, typography, 3D printing and animation workshops).

The Department is largely publicly funded by the state and has seen an increase in the budget allocated to it over the last years. The current budget for the Department is at €471.921,43. As a result the Department is able to cover the basic costs for the overheads and the running of the laboratories and workshops as well as the costs for student support services and administrative offices.

II. Analysis

According to the Strategic Planning and mission statement of the Department, as outlined in the Quality Assurance Proposal, the plans for the next five years of the continuing Department, are well presented and argued, with consideration for hiring of new academic staff in order to cover the positions of outgoing retired staff members.

The number of students enrolled on the course according to data provided, namely for the academic years 2020 to 2023, demonstrates that there is a considerably high number of incoming students. The overall total number of enrolled students, including those continuing on beyond the eighth semester without graduating, is at 1298 (2024), a large proportion of those registered are female students.

Overall, the Panel finds that the Department is able to cover all the necessary running and administrative costs as well as cover overheads and the running of laboratories. Teaching is done in purpose built laboratories and lecture rooms.

As discussed with the Vice Rector and members of MODIP, the number of incoming students was lowered to a reasonable amount in the years 2023-24.

However, the Panel did find that there are issues arising with regard to the two different pathways, the Graphic Design and the Graphic Design and Technology. As highlighted above, the two pathways are remnants of the previous amalgamation of the former historic TEI Department. The transition into the new Department and University in 2018 meant change in the structure and notably, the name of the new Department to Graphic Design and Visual Communication. After the meetings with both Vice Rector, Academic Staff and current students of the courses, it is evident that the second pathway, Graphic Design and Technology, currently only has 6 students in total enrolled on this pathway.

Following consultation with the current students, it was also noted that there is particularly low engagement with this pathway.

The Panel also discussed how the other pathway, namely Visual Communication, which is in the Degree title that students graduate with, is covered within the current modules offered.

III. Conclusions

The Panel finds that overall the Department complies with the outcomes of Principle 1 and is satisfied that the Department's Profile and Mission Statement. However, the SWOT analysis reveals threats related to the feasibility and sustainability in the longer term of the five-year academic plan. The plans from the previous amalgamation into the new one, with the two different pathways of Graphic Design and Graphic Design and Technology leave an area of concern with regard to the curriculum structure. Another point for concern is the inclusion of the new strand of Visual Communication in the overall degree awarding title of the programme.

The Panel thus finds that the Department is fully compliant in Principle 1 in:

- a. Academic profile and mission statement,
- b. The strategy of the institution for its academic development
- c. The documentation of the feasibility of the operation of the department and the study programme
- d. The number of admitted students

And finds that the Department is substantially compliant in the sub-principles of:

- e. The structure of studies
- f. The documentation of the sustainability of the new department
- g. Post-graduate studies

The Panel recommends a restructuring and reviewing of the current two pathways, as currently they will not be sustainable in the projected five-year plan. Especially with regard to the pathway Graphic Design and Technology, a different approach is needed in order to offer up to date and relevant modules.

Overall, this would resolve issues going forward of renewing retired staff and their positions, as areas noted above are becoming outdated. It will also attract more students to the pathway and ensure that there is a balance between the offered pathways, the ratio of academic staff per student on each pathway.

Panel Judgement

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

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

Panel Recommendations

- That the members of MODIP and the internal evaluation committees consider revising the structure of the curriculum and reflect on ways of longer-term sustainability and feasibility.
- Adjust the proposal for new incoming academic staff to replace ones that are retiring.

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.

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The Department, in collaboration with the MO.DIP., has established and harmonised the Quality Policy of the Undergraduate Programme in accordance with the principles of the Institution's Quality Policy (Decision of the Institution's Senate, 4th extraordinary meeting, 08-05-2020). The Department's strategic quality objectives, which are monitored through specific indicators, derive from the Quality Policy. Academic staff are committed to and participate in processes of continuous improvement of the programme, including teaching, research and services provided to the students, with a primary focus on the provision of substantial higher education, in terms of basic and specialized interdisciplinary knowledge, targeted laboratory experience and the cultivation of distinguished skills.

The priority axes include the effort to optimize the interdisciplinary curriculum provided, the qualitative upgrade of the teaching work and the learning process, the strengthening of student-centred learning and student care, through the connection of teaching with research and other methods that focus on the performance and efficiency of the Department's students, the continuous

improvement of the working conditions of the staff, the promotion of the quality and quantity of the work provided and the strengthening of the Department's visibility, the development of the Department's extroversion, the information of students and the local community on issues of sustainability and viability, as well as the culture of the necessity of the existence of quality assurance procedures for studies.

II. Analysis

The Department has presented detailed and convincing evidence in relation to excellence in education, the promotion of research, the promotion of design/artistic work, the improvement of its academic environment, its extroversion-internationalization, the sustainability and sustainable development of the proposed curriculum, as well as quality assurance.

The Panel encourages the Department to continue the efforts in internal evaluation and ensure that information communicated to third parties, is kept up to date with all relevant information provided.

III. Conclusions

The Department must constantly check the appropriateness of the structure and organisation of the undergraduate programme, the pursuit of learning outcomes and the qualifications it has set in accordance with the European and National Framework of Qualifications for Disability Education, the promotion of the quality and effectiveness of teaching, the suitability of the qualifications of the academic staff, the promotion of the quality and quantity of the research work of the members of the academic unit, the ways of connecting teaching with research, the level of demand for the acquired qualifications of graduates in the labour market

It must also ensure the level of support services, such as administrative services, libraries and student welfare services, are all up to date and provide with information that is relevant and timely.

Panel Judgement

Principle 2: Quality assurance policy of the Institution and the academic unit	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

N/A

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.

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The Department of Graphic Design and Visual Communication was established in 2018 with the operation of two pathways: Graphic Design and Graphic Arts Technology. Students may opt for one or the other after the fifth semester of their studies. The Department has also recently established the Curriculum Committee, which is in discussions for a possible revision of the Curriculum, and the Curriculum Advisory Board, which will meet for the first time in 2025. The subject matter of the Curriculum falls within the dual educational sector of School of Applied Arts and Culture, visual communication design as well as the technological and operational management and implementation of each project in the broader field of Graphic Arts.

The reorganisation of the Department was carried out with the main goal of creating new scientists with artistic education, excellent training in scientific and technological subjects, penetrating perception and in-depth knowledge of the distinct scientific subjects of the Department.

The Department of Fine Arts specialises in three main fields of knowledge, which are treated by its respective Sections: Graphic Design, Visual Arts and Moving Image, as well as Graphic Arts Technology.

In the 1st and 2nd year of studies, courses are offered for the acquisition of basic knowledge, as well as background knowledge of the supported scientific fields. Of these, 19 are compulsory core courses and 14 are Compulsory Elective Courses.

The new undergraduate programme enables students of the Department to come into contact with the real conditions prevailing in the labour market and to gain work experience before they even graduate, in three ways: through a Master's Thesis, Practical Training, as well as through Mobility.

Also, efforts are being made within the framework of certain theoretical or laboratory courses for students to participate in projects that offer the possibility of interaction with external agencies.

In addition, in some cases, the possibility of active participation of undergraduate students in the context of carrying out a research project is offered.

II. Analysis

For each of the courses offered, there is a corresponding Course Outline. The Course Outline for each course determines the form, purpose, learning outcomes, and content of the course. It also specifies the method of implementing the teaching and learning process and the method of evaluating students.

Overall the structure of the Pathways is satisfactory, however the Panel is concerned about the feasibility and sustainability of the second Pathway, Graphic Design and Technology. As noted above, it currently has a very low number of students registered, from a total of about 100 students. It appears to offer modules that are overlapping in content, for example in Semester 3, Materials of Graphic Design which is offered as an optional module as part of a laboratory, where students can create dyes for ink. Whilst this area is of significance, particularly for academic and research purposes, it might be better suited as a workshop-led training as part of a larger elective module.

The Panel is concerned about the scope of modules that are offered as mandatory modules, for example Printing Substrates and Paper Technologies, at Semester 2. As a mandatory module, this is far too narrow and specific, offering extremely specialised knowledge around for example, creating paper from pulp. Whilst in principle this module can be offered, it is highly advisable to offer this as an optional module, at a later semester.

III. Conclusions

The Department is interested in encouraging the research of faculty members. Similarly, faculty members are interested in attracting undergraduate students to participate in research subjects such as, for example, during the implementation of their thesis, which is also the axis of the Department's goal setting. Of notable importance is the interaction and long-term cooperation of faculty members with industries, organisations, advertising communication product design and research companies, publishing houses, associations, television stations, festivals, museums, as well as social organisations. These collaborations contribute to the economic and technological development of the country and at the same time give the students of the Department the opportunity to acquire research experiences and know-how while still in university classrooms and laboratories.

As noted above, both the low level of student engagement and enrolment on the Graphic Design Pathway as well as the structure and scope of the modules offered, the Panel is concerned about the feasibility and sustainability of the Pathway in Graphic Design and Technology.

It would be much more beneficial to create a pathway that reflects the current needs of the market and the needs of the students. These could include marketing, branding or product design, for example. It was also noted when discussing with external stakeholders and partners, that there is an increasing demand in the

market for product packaging. Again, this would make much more sense in a pathway aimed at equipping students with marketing, branding and product packaging skills and knowledge.

The Panel recommends that the internal monitoring procedures for the design and monitoring of the Pathways ensure that both Pathways offer equal opportunities for students to engage with, offer staff opportunities for growth and development and allow the development of modules that are concurrent with technological advancement in digital production and digital fabrication.

There appear to be processes in the monitoring and approval of the new undergraduate programme that are not entirely transparent, for example, where and how do the internal committees of MODIP and OMEA reach decisions regarding the feasibility and sustainability of some modules, with overlapping content, are carried on.

Panel Judgement

Principle 3: Design, approval and monitoring of the quality of the new undergraduate programmes	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	X
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- The Pathway of Graphic Design and Technology needs to be fully revised and reviewed by the internal committees, MODIP and OMEA, in a transparent way.
- The overall design of the degree, where Visual Communication is included in the degree title, must also be addressed within the above revision and restructure.
- The Panel recommends that the Department look at ways of changing the current pathway offered in Graphic Design and Technology to something that is more suitable to the needs of the current market and reflect the needs of the students. These could be, but not limited to: Product Design and Packaging, Product Design and Innovation, Animation and Motion Graphic Design, User Oriented (UX) and Market oriented studies.
- This would allow for pre-existing laboratories to run, but at the same time introduce new areas of study as above, including UX, illustration, Digital Lettering, Branding etc. and expand in areas of new technologies and tools, like UX coding, 3D printing and 3D digital tools (3D, CAD etc), CNC, laser-cutting etc.

Principle 4: Student-centered 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.

Study Programme Compliance.

I. Findings

The programme, following the department's policy, has adopted a strategy that engages students in their academic journey, ensuring that they take an active role in their learning by offering choice between two Pathways and some elective courses throughout the 4 years of study, multiple modes of course delivery, and a diverse range of pedagogical methods tailored to their needs. Faculty members employ various teaching techniques, including lectures supported by digital tools such as PowerPoint presentations, audiovisual materials, and interactive discussions. Studio – led teaching takes place in designated labs and workshops. These methods encourage student participation and engagement with course content. In laboratory courses, students undertake individual or group projects that enhance their autonomy, creativity, and critical thinking skills. Emphasis is placed on fostering independent learning while ensuring appropriate guidance from teaching staff.

Assessment practices within the department reflect the principles of student-centred learning. The criteria and assessment methods are made available at the beginning of each course, ensuring transparency and allowing students to understand expectations from the outset. Various evaluation techniques are employed, including written examinations, project submissions, oral presentations, and practical assignments, catering to different learning styles and ensuring a comprehensive assessment of students' skills and knowledge. The department actively gathers student feedback through satisfaction surveys, which are used to evaluate and improve teaching methodologies. Additionally, mechanisms are in place for students to express concerns and appeal academic decisions through a formal complaint procedure.

To provide further academic support, each student is assigned an academic advisor responsible for guiding them throughout their studies. Usually, each faculty member advises around 6 students, assisting them with academic and personal challenges and career planning. Special attention is given to students with disabilities, ensuring equal access to educational resources through tailored support services. The programme also promotes active student participation beyond the classroom by encouraging involvement in competitions, research projects, and collaborations with professional organizations. Students have the opportunity to present their work at university-hosted exhibitions and international forums, further enhancing their academic and professional development.

The undergraduate programme of Graphic Design and Visual Communication has established strong links with industry partners, integrating real-world projects into

the curriculum. Through these partnerships, students gain practical experience by working on assignments from external clients and participating in industry-sponsored competitions. Workshops, inter-university collaborations, and summer schools are regularly organized to provide students with additional learning opportunities in interdisciplinary settings.

The use of digital learning platforms, such as Moodle and MS Teams, further enhances the learning experience by providing easy access to course materials, assignments, and feedback.

II. Analysis

Students have expressed a strong desire for greater autonomy in shaping their academic experience. One of their key concerns is the limited availability of elective modules, which restricts their ability to specialise in areas of personal interest. They argue that expanding the selection of elective courses would allow them to develop expertise in emerging fields and align their education with their career aspirations. Furthermore, they have suggested a revision of the programme's modules, especially where the content is overlapping.

A major area of concern raised by students is the absence of courses that focus on recent developments in graphic design. They have advocated for the inclusion of and/or enrichment of new digital developments, such as animation, artificial intelligence in graphic design, and augmented reality, which are becoming increasingly relevant in the industry. According to students, these subjects are crucial in preparing them for the evolving professional landscape.

Additionally, students have emphasised the need for a greater balance between theoretical knowledge and practical application. While they acknowledge the importance of theoretical enquiry, they argue that the curriculum should place more emphasis on skill-sets that reflect the professional design studios. Many students have pointed out that their modules focus heavily on delivery of content without offering applied or concept-based skillsets. They believe that a more hands-on approach, including workshops, prototyping, and project-based learning, would significantly enhance their ability to transition into the workforce successfully.

According to the equivalent QAA benchmarking for Art and Design courses, students of Art and Design courses need to be equipped with skillsets for the sector. These include, apart from technical and theoretical skills and knowledge, personal innovation, risk-taking, independent enquiry, self-management, team working and complex problem solving.

Studio-based activity is a significant feature of art and design education, providing locations for both individual and group tuition. Further emphasis should be put on encouraging self-directed and peer-review feedback, especially in the final semesters before graduation. A practice-based approach enhances critical and conceptual thinking, allowing students to create their own brand within visual

communication. They argue that while they are equipped with creative and conceptual skills, they often lack the digital expertise required to bring their designs to life in real-world settings.

Students have asked for more studio-based workshops and collaborative workshops that focus on delivering digital skill-sets aimed at problem solving, like innovation and branding. By incorporating these elements, students will be better prepared to navigate the demands of the professional field, gaining both creative and technical competencies. Last but not least, students suggested collaboration and synergies with other departments of the university such as with the photography department and others in applied arts.

At a time of rapid digital advancement in our culture and society, industry collaborations and integrating hands-on learning opportunities would ensure that students graduate with a well-rounded and industry-ready skill set. By taking these steps, the Department of Graphic Design and Visual Communication can further align itself with the evolving needs of its students and the professional field.

III. Conclusions

The Department of Graphic Design and Visual Communication has successfully implemented a student-centred approach, providing students with multiple learning pathways, diverse pedagogical methods, and strong industry connections. Whilst there are very good laboratories and in-studio learning offered, the Panel finds that the Department needs to further make changes in order to reflect the current needs of students and the market. Feedback from the meetings with students highlights the need for increased elective options, and a stronger emphasis on emerging fields such as animation, artificial intelligence in graphic design, and augmented reality.

Additionally, students seek a more balanced approach between theory and practice, advocating for hands-on learning experiences that equip them with both creative and technical competencies. Addressing these concerns through curriculum revisions will further strengthen the programme's relevance and ensure that graduates are well-prepared for the evolving demands of the design profession.

For the aforementioned reasons the panel finds Principle 4 substantially compliant and invites the faculty to take actions as suggested in the recommendation section.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Introduce electives or workshop led modules that bring in digital technologies and innovative ways of design, like UX, Illustrator
- Enhance and invite external stake-holders and former students that have their own design agencies, like Semiotic Agency, Odd Bleat, etc to give lectures and workshops that will link students with the current market.

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).

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The programme Graphic Design and Visual Communication at the University of West Attica has established a structured approach to student admission, progression, and the awarding of degrees and certificates to ensure transparency and academic excellence. The admission process is governed by national regulations, with students entering the programme through national entrance examinations. Additional admission routes are available for students with special conditions, such as those with severe medical conditions, international students, and those transferring from other institutions. The programme ensures that incoming students are well supported in their transition to university life through an organized induction programme, academic counselling, and access to online resources detailing academic regulations and student rights.

Student progression is monitored through a structured evaluation process. Faculty members track academic performance through coursework, examinations, and research projects. The department ensures that students are aware of their academic standing by providing clear assessment criteria and feedback mechanisms. The European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS) is implemented across the curriculum, facilitating student mobility within the European Higher Education Area. The Diploma Supplement is issued automatically to all graduates in both Greek and English, ensuring that their qualifications are recognized internationally.

According to the data provided for the students currently enrolled, there is a higher number of women as opposed to men. There is a large number of students that are registered beyond the eight semesters, without graduating on time. The data and graphs show that only a very small percentage of students (currently at 4%) opt for the Graphic Design and Technology Pathway. The number of students opting for this has been in gradual decline since 2020-21.

The department maintains a set of quality requirements for the completion of the undergraduate thesis, including specific guidelines on structure, methodology, and originality. A Thesis Handbook is available to assist students in understanding expectations and requirements. Practical training is an integral part of the programme, with students undertaking internships in collaboration with social, cultural, and industrial partners. These placements provide students with valuable job-specific skills, bridging the gap between academic knowledge and professional practice.

To further enhance student mobility, the department actively participates in the Erasmus+ programme, allowing students to study at partner institutions abroad and gain international experience. The programme ensures full recognition of credits earned at host institutions, facilitating a seamless transition back into the home curriculum. The department is committed to continuous improvement in student

admission, progression, and recognition of academic qualifications. Recommendations include expanding career services, enhancing partnerships with industries for internships, and providing more comprehensive guidance on postgraduate opportunities. These steps will further solidify the department's commitment to academic excellence and student success.

II. Analysis

Both students and stakeholders have advocated for extending the internship duration from the current two months to a minimum of three, but ideally between three to six months. This additional time would allow students to gain a deeper understanding of workplace dynamics, refine their professional skills, and establish stronger industry connections. Moreover, a longer internship period would incentivise employers to invest more in student training, making the experience more substantial and mutually beneficial. The idea of extending the internship was also supported by the faculty.

An issue that remains persistent is the high number of students that remain enrolled after the eighth semester of study without graduating. The Panel had the opportunity to meet students that are enrolled, for example, on their 19th academic semester. A disproportionate amount of these are female.

III. Conclusions

The Graphic Design and Visual Communication programme at the University of West Attica follows a structured and transparent approach to student admission, progression, and degree awarding, ensuring academic excellence and compliance with national and European standards. The programme facilitates student mobility through the ECTS system and provides strong academic support mechanisms. However, feedback from students and stakeholders highlights areas for further development regarding the internship. The Panel also recommends that the Department form a strategy for monitoring and graduation of all students currently enrolled beyond the 10th semester.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The Department needs to revise the duration of the internship, with the possibility of offering options for up to six months. A flexible internship structure could accommodate students who wish to gain deeper industry experience while ensuring alignment with academic requirements.
- The Department needs to make further efforts to ensure on-time graduation of students, and see that students that are enrolled beyond the first eight to ten semesters are effectively monitored and encouraged to complete their studies.

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.

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

Academic staff are appointed as full-time, have the appropriate knowledge subjects to support and ensure the announcement of new positions with knowledge subjects necessary for support of the Department and the programme, following a decision of the Department's General Assembly.

The teaching work of the departmental staff includes teaching obligations of at least 6 hours/week during the academic year and the presence on university premises at least 12 hours/week, in addition to the 6 hours of teaching work, preparation of laboratory exercises, submission and updating of course educational material on the electronic asynchronous distance learning platform of article 68, organisation and operation of laboratories, tutorial courses, seminars, writing teaching aids, supervision of assignments, diploma theses and doctoral theses, supervision of student internships, conducting/supervising examinations and evaluation, collaboration with students on issues of their educational-research activity, and student evaluation. Research, scientific, laboratory and visual work includes basic or applied research, writing and publishing research papers, guidance-supervision of undergraduate, postgraduate and doctoral theses, participation in scientific conferences, workshops and seminars, visual exhibitions and events, scientifically responsible for research projects. The administrative work includes participation in the collective administrative bodies of the University, participation in committees, holding the position of Director of Sector(s), President of the Department, and participation in electoral bodies, advisory committees

II. Analysis

The Department encourages the professional and scientific development of the teaching staff by granting leaves for scientific reasons (teaching or research) for domestic or foreign purposes, like participation in scientific conferences, participation in seminars, short-term teaching at universities abroad, and exchange programs between universities abroad (ERASMUS+ programs).

The Department needs to take further into account feedback from scientific and professional bodies, as well as the submission of (documented) observations and suggestions to the Department through the internal committees of MODIP and OMEA. Further transparency and including student's evaluations and feedback in the decision making process needs to be made evident, where possible with course evaluation outcomes discussed and proceedings of meetings adequately logged.

There should also be the production of more and significant impact publications in international scientific journals, collective volumes and proceedings of peer-reviewed conferences, also through the encouragement of collaborations at the undergraduate or postgraduate level with other similar departments at home or abroad and mobility of the Department's faculty members, through the ERASMUS program.

III. Conclusions

The main objectives of the Department's research strategy are the continuous effort to reform and optimise the provided programme, taking into account the structure of corresponding departments abroad. This includes the qualitative upgrade of the teaching work and the learning process, the strengthening of student-centred learning and student care through the connection of teaching with research and other methods, which focus on the performance and efficiency of the Department's students, the promotion of the quality and quantity of the Department's multi-level research and artistic work, as well as the strengthening of its recognition, the continuous improvement of the working conditions of the teaching, research, administrative and other staff.

the development of the Department's extroversion through the promotion of the multifaceted of its work, mobility -students and staff- through actions supported by the Foundation, as well as projects to re-establish contacts with graduates, and strengthen the already important links with the labour market, the informing and raising awareness of students and the local community on issues of sustainability and sustainable development, the strengthening the culture around the necessity of having quality assurance procedures for studies. The Quality Policy Statement is posted on the Department's website, at the following link: <https://gd.uniwa.gr/politiki-poiotitas-pps-toy-tmimatos/>

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- The Department need to encourage transparent decision-making processes about the feasibility and sustainability following the retirement of current academic members of 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.).

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The Department of Graphic Design and Visual Communication of the University of West Attica has devoted substantial resources and infrastructure to ensure the successful functioning of the new Undergraduate Study Programme in Graphic Design and Visual Communication. The academic department enjoys contemporary teaching resources, featuring fully-equipped classrooms, exclusive design studios, and specialized computer labs equipped with industry-standard software for graphic design and visual communication. These resources guarantee that students can access the essential tools needed to cultivate their artistic and technical abilities within a professional learning setting.

The Department of Graphic Design and Visual Communication is located on the university campus at Alsos Egaleo, particularly in buildings 8 and 9 of the School of Applied Arts and Culture. The department possesses two dedicated lecture rooms (with seating capacities of 65 and 54 students, respectively), partial access to the central amphitheater for larger academic functions, and specialized laboratory classrooms.

The teaching studios and laboratories of Graphic Design as well as Graphic Design and Technology are equipped for ink printing, offset, typography as well as 3D printing and animation workshops. There is a dedicated computer lab where students are taught open-source coding. Every laboratory is furnished with the essential scientific instruments and digital resources needed for efficient practical training. Moreover, there are 10 faculty offices, a President's office, one administrative office, and three storage areas allocated for faculty and lab usage.

In addition to physical facilities, the university offers extensive digital resources to enhance student learning. These consist of access to Microsoft Office 365 featuring 30GB of cloud storage, Matlab and SPSS software for data analysis, and both asynchronous (e-Class) and synchronous (MS Teams) online learning environments. The organization guarantees that students can utilize a comprehensive library featuring both physical books and online databases pertinent to their area of study.

Support services at the university are aimed at meeting the needs of a varied student body. The university provides career guidance, academic support services, and tailored help for students with disabilities. Moreover, faculty and administrative personnel make certain that students are consistently updated regarding the accessibility of these services.

II. Analysis

The Department shows a robust dedication to enhancing student education by providing access to top-notch resources and facilities. The funding for contemporary infrastructure, such as design studios, computing labs, and libraries, corresponds effectively with the requirements of the study programme. The presence of digital resources and online databases enhances the educational experience and aids in cultivating the technical and creative abilities necessary for graphic design.

A well-organised maintenance and support system is established to guarantee the ongoing operation and security of academic areas. This encompasses routine on-site checks by the Maintenance Department, a digital request management system for issue reporting, and planned safety assessments by qualified staff. These actions aid in the maintenance and updating of university facilities, guaranteeing that students and faculty work in a secure and well-kept setting.

A significant drawback is the absence of specific student housing on campus. Although the university does not offer its own student housing, a small selection of accommodations can be accessed through collaborations with external student residences in Zografou, Athens University, and Athens Student Housing. This could create difficulties for students needing more affordable or accessible housing options, especially those arriving from outside the city.

The university's dedication to inclusivity is clear through the support services offered to students with disabilities. These encompass tailored educational resources, user-friendly digital platforms, and personalized learning approaches. Furthermore, having highly qualified administrative and support personnel improves the efficiency of student services, guaranteeing that students obtain the required academic and personal assistance during their studies.

In spite of that, to uphold the high quality of educational resources and support services, the university needs to guarantee ongoing investment in its facilities and digital infrastructure. The enduring sustainability of these resources relies on continuous financial investment, strategic development, and flexibility in response to technological progress.

III. Conclusions

The Department of Graphic Design and Visual Communication of the University of West Attica shows significant adherence to Principle 7 by offering organised learning materials and student assistance services. The Department's dedication to finance, contemporary facilities, and student-focused support systems greatly enhances the quality and longevity of the academic program.

To better promote compliance, the university ought to consistently assess the sufficiency of its resources, invest in continual enhancements, and guarantee that

support services stay adaptable to the changing needs of students. Furthermore, boosting student awareness of accessible services via improved communication methods could further enhance student involvement and academic achievement. Increasing access to student accommodation choices, enhancing infrastructure upkeep, and incorporating additional digital learning resources will likewise contribute positively to upholding high educational standards.

A significant emphasis should be placed on enhancing student accommodation. The university must explore options to enhance on-campus housing or collaborate with external firms to address the increasing need for accommodation. Updating bibliography and references to include expanded physical and digital platforms that can be accessed via the University's library is key.

In addition to physical infrastructure, enhancing the university's digital resource is also essential. Incorporating more advanced technology and online platforms will enhance the learning experience for students, providing greater flexibility and making education more interactive.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Identify and seek new ways of involving private stakeholders to fund digital laboratories and workshop areas in emerging and market trends.
- Ensure students are aware of the student support mechanisms available to them
- Ensure accommodation needs are met for students who do not reside in the Attica region.

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.

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The University of West Attica has created a comprehensive information management system that aids in the gathering, analysis, and use of data concerning the new undergraduate program in Graphic Design and Visual Communication. The system facilitates academic and administrative functions via multiple digital platforms. The iamUniWA app, created in partnership with the University of Macedonia, offers students access to vital services like course schedules, exam timetables, academic records, book requests, library resources, and dining information for students. The unification of these services into one platform improves accessibility and usability for the educational community.

The Institute manages an extensive digital framework, featuring a student record system, web portals for faculty and students, a quality assurance system (MODIP), as well as platforms for managing research projects, personnel, and financial services. The Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP) has introduced various evaluation instruments that enable the ongoing assessment of courses and instructors. Student assessments are consistently gathered and examined, with findings provided to teachers one month following each exam period. These outcomes aid in faculty self-enhancement and are taken into account during faculty promotion evaluations. The department chair and the academic quality assurance coordinator assess these evaluations, which are also deliberated in departmental meetings to pinpoint best practices and areas needing enhancement.

The Graphic Design and Visual Communication Department actively employs the Open eClass platform to oversee and facilitate all undergraduate courses. Information gathered from this platform, including course visit metrics and student interaction with learning resources, is examined to enhance educational quality. The department methodically monitors essential performance metrics linked to student involvement and achievement, guaranteeing an ongoing feedback process for educational improvement.

The university keeps comprehensive statistical records on student achievement, faculty assessments, and research endeavours through MODIP. The student evaluation questionnaires offer important insights on the courses and instructors, while institutional data is gathered for accreditation and quality assurance objectives. The Career Office is also essential in gathering data, monitoring graduate job results, and distributing surveys to alumni and employers. Furthermore, the university participates in the national eDiplomas service, enabling digital degree verification, which simplifies administrative tasks associated with graduate certification.

II. Analysis

The University has established a highly effective system for managing academic and administrative data. The integration of digital platforms ensures efficient data collection, organization, and accessibility, supporting evidence-based decision-making. The use of the iamUniWA application and web portals significantly enhances the student experience by providing centralized access to academic resources and administrative services. The MODIP quality assurance system allows for the systematic evaluation of courses and faculty, fostering a culture of continuous improvement. The results of student evaluations are not only used for faculty self-assessment but also influence faculty promotions and strategic academic planning. Departmental meetings further facilitate the discussion of evaluation results, encouraging the exchange of best practices among faculty members.

The Open eClass platform provides additional insights into student engagement by tracking course visits and the use of educational resources. This data is instrumental in refining teaching methodologies and optimising course delivery. The integration of student records, faculty evaluations, and career tracking data offers a comprehensive view of student progression and graduate outcomes. The research activity tracking system (ALEXANDREIA) contributes to the institution's ability to assess its research output and align it with academic goals.

Despite these strengths, there is room for improvement in the integration of data across different systems. The seamless correlation of data from student records, quality assurance reports, and career office surveys could further enhance strategic decision-making. Additionally, ensuring complete and accurate reporting in the National Information System for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (NISQA) remains a priority for accreditation purposes.

III. Conclusions

The University of West Attica has established a strong system for managing its undergraduate programs based on data. The use of digital platforms guarantees effective administrative operations, enhances student involvement, and promotes ongoing quality enhancement. The internal evaluation MODIP system offers essential information on academic success and teacher effectiveness, whereas the Career Office monitors employment trends for graduates. Utilising Open eClass for educational oversight bolsters the institution's capacity to improve teaching and learning results.

Additional advancements are required to combine and examine data across various systems more efficiently. Enhancing the relationship among academic performance data, quality assurance indicators, and graduate tracking information would yield greater understanding of student achievement and program success. Maintaining

adherence to national quality assurance reporting standards is vital for preserving accreditation and the credibility of the institution.

Routine assessments of NISQA submissions need to be carried out to guarantee their accuracy and comprehensiveness. Initiatives must be implemented to raise awareness among students and faculty about the existing digital tools to enhance their usage. Furthermore, enhancing alumni engagement strategies would optimize long-term career monitoring and guide program development.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- Enhance data integration between platforms and sources across the Department, from student evaluation questionnaires to the internal meetings of MODIP.
- Utilise more effectively and transparently the outcomes of the data gathered, and include documentation from meetings with OMEA and MODIP on matters arising.

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.

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The Department has taken steps to guarantee that details regarding the new Undergraduate Programme in Graphic Design and Visual Communication are accessible to students, potential students, and other stakeholders. The department has established a systematic method for managing and refreshing its website content. A committed group manages the effective operation of the website and guarantees that the information released is current and precise. A distinct procedure has been set up for examining and revising materials before they are uploaded, and the website experiences a quality control assessment every semester to uphold the content's quality.

The site offers a comprehensive array of crucial details for students and interested parties. This comprises information regarding the department's objectives, its quality policy, and a promotional video highlighting the department's functions. Moreover, it provides details regarding the faculty and staff of the department, the organization of undergraduate and master's programs, the academic calendar, course timetables, exam schedules, and student resources including forms and regulations. Additional useful resources consist of information regarding internships, hands-on training, and updates on department events, conferences, and various academic activities.

In spite of these initiatives, multiple problems hinder the website's accessibility and effectiveness. A major issue is the absence of a bilingual website. Currently, the website is mainly in Greek, offering only essential information in English. Crucial documents like departmental rules, announcements, event information, and other materials are not provided in English, restricting access to information for international students and stakeholders.

An additional significant concern is the design of the website. The existing design is simple and fails to capture the contemporary, innovative essence anticipated from a department focused on Graphic Design and Visual Communication.

The website is functional, but it lacks the dynamic and visually appealing elements that could showcase the department's identity and engage users effectively. Furthermore, there is limited effort to publicise the department and its new programme, and the website serves more as a passive resource than an active promotional tool.

II. Analysis

The Department employs a systematic method for overseeing the content on its website, with procedures established to guarantee that the information is consistently reviewed and refreshed. This is a beneficial aspect since it guarantees that students and stakeholders can depend on the reliability and timeliness of the information given. The presence of a wide array of information, such as insights into the department's

goals, educational resources, and student assistance, is a strong point. This clarity assists students in successfully navigating academic and administrative procedures.

Regardless, the absence of a bilingual site poses a considerable problem. The lack of an English version of the website, particularly for essential documents like rules and event information, restricts the department's capacity to draw in and involve international students. This likewise impacts the department's capacity to establish an international reputation and promote global academic partnerships.

The fundamental layout of the website is an additional significant issue. Considering the department's academic emphasis on Graphic Design and Visual Communication, the website ought to embody the department's creative spirit. Conversely, the present website design appears antiquated and is missing the engaging and attractive features that would represent the department's area of expertise. A more vibrant and contemporary design would not only assist in showcasing the department's innovative identity but also improve the user experience, making the website more appealing to students, potential students, and other visitors.

Aside from design issues, the insufficient promotion of the department and the new program restricts its visibility. The website serves mainly as a resource center, but it does not actively highlight the department's activities, events, or accomplishments.

This lack of publicity diminishes the department's ability to engage prospective students and other stakeholders, potentially limiting its growth and the outreach of its new programme.

III. Conclusions

Although the department has made notable strides in delivering crucial information via its website, various significant concerns must be resolved to enhance the department's public image and accessibility. The organised method of content management guarantees that the information stays up-to-date and correct, yet the lack of a bilingual website greatly restricts access for global stakeholders. Additionally, the website's design does not match the creative essence of the department's area, and the absence of dynamic, engaging features diminishes its utility as a promotional resource.

The department's initiatives to provide information are beneficial, yet these limitations impede the website's overall effectiveness. To better represent the department's academic emphasis and to draw a broader audience from both domestic and international spheres, it is essential to rectify the absence of an English-language version of crucial documents and to update the website's design. Moreover, greater emphasis should be placed on promoting the department and its new programme, utilising the website as a key platform to highlight its activities, events, and accomplishments.

In addition, a thorough overhaul of the website is necessary. This redesign should capture the modern and innovative spirit of their Graphic Design and Visual Communication program. The goal is to develop an appealing and easy-to-use platform that clearly conveys their academic emphasis and departmental principles. A design that is more engaging and accessible would highlight the department's innovative nature and leave a memorable first impression on potential students.

Regularly showcasing departmental events, activities, and accomplishments with appealing content—incorporating interactive elements, carefully selected image collections, and frequent news updates—will greatly boost engagement with potential students and the wider community. This will improve the department's reputation and boost its visibility at both national and international stages.

Panel Judgement

Principle 9: Public information concerning the new undergraduate programmes	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	X
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- It is essential to ensure the website is fully functioning in both Greek and English.
- Create a bespoke website that will attract students and appeal to a local and global audience.

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.

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The Department has in place an internal quality assurance system, that aims at annual internal review of their programme and curriculum.

The internal evaluation committees, OMEA and MODIP, are in charge of the procedures for internal evaluation. They are responsible for gathering the statistical data and information regarding student enrolment, student graduates as well as feedback from student questionnaires.

A self-evaluation flow chart us the first port of call of gathering all necessary information, such as updates to the current curriculum to meet students expectations and needs, improving current teaching methods and enhancing student centred learning and improve communication and feedback between academic teaching staff and students.

Following the initial self-evaluation procedures, the internal evaluation committees MODIP and OMEA are responsible for advising on matters arising.

II. Analysis

The Panel meetings held with the Vice-Rector, as well as representatives of the OMEA and MODIP committees, during the virtual meetings of Monday 25/02/2025 and Tuesday 25/02/2025, demonstrate the importance of the role of the committees in the internal review process. In attendance were Vice Rector Professor Stavros Kaminaris, Professor Vassiliki Belessi, President of OMEA, Professor Sofia Strati, member of OMEA, Associate Professor Spyros Siakas and member of OMEA, Associate Professor Vangelis Hatzitheodorou member of OMEA, Assistant Professor Dimitris Christidis member of OMEA, Lecturer Ourania Efstathiadou, member of OMEA as Administrative Head of MODIP, Dr Marisa Sigala.

The committees have effectively utilised the outcomes of data and questionnaires in the Annual Statistical Evaluation report, highlighting strengths and weaknesses and areas that need to be addressed.

The Department acknowledges that the low number of students currently enrolled on the Pathway Graphic Design and Technology is a threat. There is no proposal or indication however how the Department plans to address this issue over the course of the next five years in the Strategic Plan.

III. Conclusions

The Panel is satisfied that the Department undergoes annual internal evaluation that aims at creating a supportive and effective learning environment for students. It must be noted however that the Annual Statistical Evaluation report that the Panel was presented is not up to date, as it reflects the academic year 2020-21.

Whilst the Internal Quality Assurance procedures and protocols are in place and followed through, there are areas that are weak in terms of accuracy and transparency of the decision-making process, especially with regard to updating the curriculum to reflect current trends in the market as well as according to student feedback. The Department needs to address the above issues within the Strategic Planning and overview of the next.

Panel Judgement

Principle 10: Periodic internal review of the new study programmes	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- The Department needs to address the identified threats and weakness and introduce ways of re-evaluation and re-design that aim at updating the curriculum to reflect current trends in the market as well as student needs.

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.

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

The Department of Graphic Design and Visual Communication at the University of West Attica has not undergone an external evaluation until now, having relied primarily on internal assessments and reports submitted to the university's internal quality assurance unit (MODIP). These internal evaluations, while valuable, were primarily descriptive, based on predefined quality indicators. With this first external evaluation, the department marks a significant step towards formal accreditation and quality assurance, ensuring that its academic offerings meet evolving educational and industry requirements.

Faculty members and academic administrators recognise the importance of external evaluation in improving educational quality. The department actively engages in self-assessment procedures to identify areas for improvement and implement necessary reforms.

A structured plan has been devised to effectively utilise the feedback from the external evaluation process. Initially, the department will carefully examine the recommendations made by independent expert committees and, in collaboration with MODIP, decide which suggestions to implement. An Action Plan will then be developed, detailing required interventions, allocated resources, and an implementation timeline. Transparency is a key priority, with evaluation results and accreditation status published on the department's website. Regular progress reports will document the execution of these recommendations, with continuous monitoring over the following two years. Moving forward, the department aims to further strengthen its evaluation processes by incorporating additional data collection methods, such as graduate employability surveys and employer feedback. Expanding international collaborations with accredited institutions will also enhance the program's global standing. By embracing external evaluation as a tool for continuous improvement, the Department of Graphic Design and Visual Communication ensures that its undergraduate program remains academically rigorous, professionally relevant, and internationally recognized.

II. Analysis

The Department of Graphic Design and Visual Communication has demonstrated exceptional commitment and diligence in preparing for the first external evaluation of one of its programmes. The supplementary materials provided to the evaluation committee were comprehensive, well-organised, and highly informative, offering a

clear and detailed picture of the programme's structure, academic processes, and overall student experience. This level of preparation reflects the department's dedication to transparency and continuous improvement. Such meticulous preparation sets a strong foundation for meaningful improvements and further strengthens the department's academic credibility. The engagement of all stakeholders, administration, faculty, students, stakeholders and their openness in the discussions show their awareness of the importance of the external review and its contribution to improvement.

III. Conclusions

The Department of Graphic Design and Visual Communication has taken a significant step forward by undergoing its first external evaluation. The department's thorough preparation and exceptional supplementary materials provided a clear and transparent overview of its academic practices, demonstrating a strong commitment to quality assurance.

The faculty is encouraged to rigorously follow the processes and steps outlined in their application, ensuring that the insights and recommendations from the evaluation report are carefully considered. By actively engaging with the feedback, revising, and enriching the curriculum, the department will not only enhance the quality of its program but also strengthen its academic standing and international recognition.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

N/A

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.

Study Programme Compliance

I. Findings

All newly enrolled students from the academic year 2019-2020 and those who were entitled to be included in the new undergraduate programme, under the legislation, follow the four-year University programme and graduate with the title of a HEI Bachelor Degree. Students already registered in 03/2018 and provided that they had not exceeded four years of studies, were given the opportunity to choose whether to follow the TEI or University program. For those who chose to continue and transfer to the University program, an additional study load was added, specifically (5) five courses. Those who chose to complete their studies by obtaining a TEI degree or those who were not given the opportunity by the legislation except to obtain a TEI degree, continued their studies while maintaining their obligations according to the TEI program without further work/study load.

II. Analysis

No further remarks.

III. Conclusions

The New Curriculum was amended and at the same time the courses of the former TEI were matched with the University of West Attica curriculum. According to this matching (no. 14224/17.02.2022 12571/16.02.2022 Decision of the President of the Department), the students of the former TEI of Athens who chose a TEI course of study were invited to attend the courses resulting from the amendment if they had not yet successfully completed them and remained within their obligations.

The students who are registered in the Department and will complete their studies as graduates of a TEI course of study amount to 458 and the academic year 2024-2025 is deleted as the time horizon within which they are invited to complete their studies.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

N/A

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

- A wide range of teaching methods, that ranges from traditional studios of drawing, printing and design alongside new technologies, like digital animation and 3D printing in laboratories.
- Purpose built laboratories where teaching is done with industry standard equipment and software, like offset and typography.
- Students take part in live industry briefs: the Panel saw a wide range of work produced that is of high standard and reflects the needs of a Greek market.
- Links with industry and external stakeholders: the Department has created and nurtured strong links with employers and partners from the public and private sector, including the animation festival AnimaSyros, Hellenic Parliament TV, Semiotic Design Agency and others.
- High end Digital Animation equipment and 3D modelling based on motion capture and scanning.

II. Areas of Weakness

- Curriculum design and approval:
The Department needs to address threats and weaknesses, in a transparent way. Introduce ways of re-evaluation and re-design that aim at updating the curriculum to reflect current trends in the market as well as student needs. Reflect the Visual Communication on the title of the Degree with more up to date and relevant modules and workshops.
- The Pathway of Graphic Design and Technology currently has a low number of enrolled students. Together with the numbers of academic staff exiting due to retirement, this creates a problematic area for the Department
- Internships: these are offered for only one to two months. Ideally, for an internship to have any impact, both for the intern and the employer, this needs to be extended to three months, possibly six. The Department should find ways of enhancing the Internship options
- Strengthen collaborations with external partners: whilst existing synergies are working well, new collaborations need to be sought especially as the areas of digital design are much needed
- Introduce electives and/or specialist workshops tied to new developments in digital design, like UX, digital branding, marketing and 3D digital fabrication.
- Create a bespoke Departmental website in order to attract and recruit students and appeal to a broader audience, both locally as well as internationally
- Find ways of attracting external funding in order to upgrade teaching and learning equipment and software
- Research and innovation: increase areas of staff research in the fields of graphic design and visual communication
- Utilise more effectively and transparently the outcomes of the data gathered, and include documentation from meetings with OMEA and MODIP on matters arising.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- The members of MODIP and the internal evaluation committees should consider revising the structure of the curriculum and reflect on ways of longer-term sustainability and feasibility. The Panel recommends that the current Pathway offered in Graphic Design and Technology either changes to something suitable for the current needs of the market and students or is entirely axed altogether to introduce new modules and a different Pathway of Visual Communication, for example, Design and Innovation or Product Design and Packaging.
- This would allow for some of the pre-existing laboratories to run, but at the same time introduce new areas of study like UX, illustration, Digital Lettering, Branding etc. and expand in areas of new technologies and tools, like UX coding, 3D printing and 3D digital tools (3D, CAD etc), CNC, laser-cutting etc.
- The Department needs to revise the duration of the internship, with the possibility of offering options for up to six months. A flexible internship structure could accommodate students who wish to gain deeper industry experience while ensuring alignment with academic requirements.
- The Department needs to make further efforts to ensure on-time graduation of students, and see that students that are enrolled beyond the eight semesters are effectively monitored and encouraged to complete their studies.
- Ensure that learning and teaching resources and labs are enhanced with up to date software and digital production facilities.
- Update the website so that all information is available in both Greek and English.
- Adjust the proposal for new incoming academic staff to replace ones that are retiring.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are:

1, 2, 10, 11 & 12

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are:

4, 5, 6, 7 & 8

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are:

3 & 9

The Principles where failure of compliance was identified are:

0

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

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname

Signature

1. Dr Stella Baraklianou



2. Associate Professor Natassa Economidou - Stavrou



3. Associate Professor Evangelia Kordoni



4. Angelos Michail Chouvardas

