



**ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ**  
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



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Ανώτατης Εκπαίδευσης**  
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**Accreditation Report**  
**for the Foreign Language Programme of:**  
**Economics and Sustainable Development**  
**Institution: University of Western Macedonia**  
**Date: 11 March 2024**



Με τη συγχρηματοδότηση  
της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης



Πρόγραμμα  
Ανθρώπινο Δυναμικό και  
Κοινωνική Συνοχή



Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the Foreign Language Programme of **Economics and Sustainable Development** of the **University of Western Macedonia** for the purposes of granting accreditation

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>Part A: Background and Context of the Review</b> .....	<b>4</b>
I. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel.....	4
II. Review Procedure and Documentation .....	5
III. Foreign Language Programme Profile .....	6
<b>Part B: Compliance with the Principles</b> .....	<b>7</b>
Principle 1: Strategic Planning .....	7
Principle 2: Quality Assurance Policy.....	9
Principle 3: Design, Approval, and Monitoring of the Quality of Foreign Language Programmes.....	11
Principle 4: Student-Centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment .....	13
Principle 5: Student Admission, Progression, Recognition of Academic Qualifications, Award of Degrees and Certificates of Qualifications of Foreign Language Programmes .....	15
Principle 6: Ensuring High Quality of the Teaching Staff of the Foreign Language Programmes.....	18
Principle 7: Learning Resources and Student Support of Foreign Language Programmes .....	21
Principle 8: Collection, Analysis, and Use of Information for the Organization and Operation of Foreign Language Programmes .....	24
Principle 9: Public Information concerning the Foreign Language Programmes .....	26
Principle 10: Periodic Internal Review of Foreign Language Programmes.....	28
Principle 11: Regular External Evaluation and Accreditation of Foreign Language Programmes .....	30
<b>Part C: Conclusions</b> .....	<b>32</b>
I. Features of Good Practice .....	32
II. Areas of Weakness .....	32
III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions .....	32
IV. Summary & Overall Assessment .....	33

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

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

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the Foreign Language Programme of **Economics and Sustainable Development** of the **University of Western Macedonia** comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

- 1. Prof. Michail DIMOU (Chair)**  
University of Toulon, France
  
- 2. Prof. Nikolaos VONORTAS**  
George Washington University, USA
  
- 3. Prof. Spyros PAVLOSTATHIS**  
Georgia Institute of Technology, USA
  
- 4. Mr. Ioannis MICHOTIS**  
Economic Chamber of Greece, Greece
  
- 5. Mr. Panagiotis PANAGIOTIDIS**  
Student, University of Thessaly, Greece

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

The accreditation review was carried out between the 4<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> of March 2024. The External Evaluation and Accreditation Panel (EEAP) had downloaded the package of files submitted by the administration of the Hellenic Authority of Higher Education (HAHE) for the Foreign Language Programme (FLP) of Economics and Sustainable Development of the University of Western Macedonia. The material included inter alia the accreditation guidelines, acronyms, the European qualifications framework, the mapping grid, the Report template, the Accreditation Guide, and the Accreditation management system manual.

As the programme is yet to commence, the evaluation procedure involved an initial accreditation process based on the organization of the future programme and the projections regarding its sustainability.

On Monday, the 4<sup>th</sup> of March, the EEAP held an internal meeting to discuss the programme and plan upcoming tasks. Subsequently, on Tuesday, the 5<sup>th</sup> of March, the Panel convened with the Rector, the Vice-Rector who also serves as the University Evaluation Unit (MODIP) President, the programme Director and members of the Internal Evaluation Team (OMEA) and MODIP.

All materials presented during these meetings were provided to the Panel members. Throughout the remainder of the week, the Panel members collaborated to draft and finalize the accreditation report.

### **III. Foreign Language Programme Profile**

The programme under review is scheduled to start in September 2024. Established officially in 2022, it is organized by three departments: the Department of Economics, the Department of Chemical Engineering, and the Department of Mathematics. A series of preliminary meetings had been arranged between the programme's director, Professor Tsounis, the heads of the three departments, and an external committee comprising six members. The objective of these meetings was to develop a competitive and contemporary curriculum in Economics by conducting a comparative analysis with 12 similar programmes offered by other European Universities.

The programme places a strong emphasis on interdisciplinarity and practical experience. All courses are conducted in English, and admission is restricted to foreign students only, in accordance with the law. Greek students are ineligible to apply for entry into the programme. In addition to acquiring knowledge, students are expected to enhance their analytical skills and cultivate unique personal and interpersonal capabilities. A minimum threshold of ten (10) students is required to initiate the programme's operations in September 2024. However, in subsequent years, the programme aims to attract approximately 35 freshmen annually.

The programme is offered on a full-time basis, spanning a duration of 4 years; and it is structured around 32 courses and 240 ECTS credits. Upon successful completion, graduates are conferred with a bachelor's degree in economics and sustainable development. The curriculum consists of 21 courses in Economics, 9 courses offered by the Department of Chemical Engineering, and 3 courses provided by the Department of Mathematics. This interdisciplinary approach aims to equip students with a comprehensive skill set relevant to both the private and public sectors. Graduates will have diverse career opportunities, including employment in the private sector, mainly the industrial, energy and building activities, as well as in the public sector. During the final semester, students have the option to undertake an optional 3 ECTS internship to further enhance their practical experience and professional skills.

The campus includes several new buildings that house staff offices, classrooms, auditoriums, and a library. However, there are no dedicated facilities for student accommodation, while catering facilities should be adapted. The campus is situated in the town of Kastoria, at a pleasant and enjoyable location.

The programme fees are 4,000€. According to the Rector of the University, it is one of the least expensive (future) programmes for foreign students in Greece.

## PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

### Principle 1: Strategic Planning

#### INSTITUTIONS AND ACADEMIC UNITS SHOULD HAVE IN PLACE AN APPROPRIATE STRATEGY FOR THE ESTABLISHMENT AND PROVISION OF FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAMMES (FLP).

*By decision of the Institutional Senate, the Institutions and their academic units should adapt their strategy to allow for the provision of FLP, in addition to attending to any special needs in terms of infrastructure, services, human resources, procedures, financial resources, and administrative systems. In this strategy, the Institutions and the academic units should anticipate the potential benefits, weaknesses, opportunities, and/or risks from their implementation and plan all the necessary actions to achieve their goals.*

#### **Relevant documentation**

- *Institutional Strategy*
- *Academic unit Strategy, including a plan for effective revenue utilization*

### Foreign Language Programme Compliance

#### Findings

The academic unit furnished the Panel with a set of informative documents detailing its brief history, operations, and the roles of its three Departments, as well as outlining the strategy of the undergraduate programme. Additionally, a comprehensive SWOT analysis of the programme was provided to the Panel. The unit also supplied information to the Panel regarding the active involvement of local stakeholders, notably the Mayor of Kastoria, for whom this programme forms part of a broader global strategy for new local development.

The FL undergraduate study programme was established in 2022, reflecting the University's decision to enhance its international presence by prioritizing foreign students. This initiative follows the enactment of a 2020 law allowing Greek Universities to establish foreign language programmes exclusively tailored to foreign students.

This is the only foreign language programme on sustainable development in Greece. OMEA is monitoring it by comparing it to similar programmes in other European universities. A total of 19 academic teaching (DEP) members from the three departments participate in the programme. Additionally, there are four ETEP and two EDIP members for the lab sessions. With 35 students per year, this results in a ratio of 1.8 students per DEP member.

All procedures aimed at ensuring high quality of the programme appear to have been implemented.

## Analysis of Judgement

The programme appears to be quite competitive among Greek Universities in the field of sustainable development. The entire University of Western Macedonia seems to specialize in environmental issues and sustainable development.

From a strategic perspective, the programme seems well-structured. However, the initial threshold of 10 students is rather low to start a programme. It is important to focus on marketing the programme to attract foreign students. The programme seems to be targeting the Chinese student market in 2024, followed by the US and the Balkan Peninsula markets. Further examination is needed to determine whether students from the Balkan region can afford the fees for an undergraduate programme.

## Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 1: Strategic Planning</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

## Panel Recommendations

**1.1** The unit should broaden the geographical areas for student recruitment.



## Principle 2: Quality Assurance Policy

**ACADEMIC UNITS SHOULD DRAFT AND IMPLEMENT A QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY, ARISING FROM THEIR STRATEGY AND SPECIALISED FOR THE SPECIFIC FLP DOMAIN, THAT IS ACCOMPANIED BY ANNUAL QUALITY ASSURANCE TARGETS, FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT.**

*The quality assurance policy of the academic unit must be formulated in the form of a statement, which is made public, and is implemented with the contribution of all stakeholders. The objective is to pursue specific annual quality goals, related to the quality assurance of the study programmes offered by the academic unit, including its FLP. In order to implement this policy, the academic unit, along with other assurances, is committed to implement effective procedures that will provide the suitability of the structure and organization of the FLP, the suitability of the qualifications of the teaching staff, as well as the quality of the support services of the academic unit that has adequate administrative staff. The academic unit also commits itself to conduct an annual internal evaluation of the FLP, realised by the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG) in collaboration with the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) of the Institution.*

### **Relevant documentation**

- Quality Policy
- Quality Targeting (utilizing S.M.A.R.T. methodology)

## Foreign Language Programme Compliance

### **Findings**

The FLP under evaluation is committed to follow the quality assurance policies of the University of Western Macedonia. The President of MODIP of the University, Prof. Sariannidis, is also a faculty member associated with the specific FLP and participated in our interviews.

The University of Western Macedonia has produced an elaborate Quality Assurance manual for Undergraduate Programmes, available in both Greek and English, which provides a step-by-step process and timing for the approval and review of such programmes.

The very detailed presentation of Professor Tsounis, Director of the programme, elaborated on the continuous monitoring and evaluation of various aspects of the programme.

### **Analysis of Judgement**

The EEAP has no reason to doubt that the Departments overseeing the specific FLP will diverge from the quality assurance plan of the University. The presented monitoring and evaluation steps are, in our view, fully appropriate.

## Conclusions

The Departments of Economics (leading), Chemical Engineering, and Mathematics are well aware of the quality assurance programme of the University and intend to follow it.

## Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 2: Quality Assurance Policy</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

## Panel Recommendations

**2.1** The Panel has no specific recommendations for Principle 2.

## Principle 3: Design, Approval, and Monitoring of the Quality of Foreign Language Programmes

ACADEMIC UNITS SHOULD DEVELOP THEIR FOREIGN LANGUAGE 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 FLP DESIGN. THE ABOVE DETAILS AS WELL AS INFORMATION ON THE PROGRAMME'S STRUCTURE ARE PUBLISHED IN THE STUDENT GUIDE.

*Academic units develop their Foreign Language Programmes following a well-defined procedure. The academic profile and orientation of the programme, the objectives, the subject areas, the structure and organisation, the expected learning outcomes and the intended professional qualifications according to the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education, are described at this stage. The above components should be taken into account and pertain to a feasibility study, which, among other things, should take into consideration the strategy of the Institution, the experience of external stakeholders from the labour market, the smooth progression of students throughout the stages of the Programme, the anticipated student workload according to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System (ECTS), the option to provide work experience to the students, the linking of teaching and research, the international experience in Programmes of the given discipline, the relevant regulatory framework, and the official procedure for the approval of the Programme by the Institution. The process of the approval or revision of the Programmes provides for the verification of compliance to the basic requirements of the Standards by the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU).*

### Relevant documentation

- Institutional Senate decision for the establishment of the FLP (par. 2, 3, and 5 of article 82 of Law 4692/2020)
- FLP Guide (bilingual, in Greek and English)
- Course outlines
- Teaching staff (list of names with scientific specializations, employment relationship, and assignment of teaching in the FLP and other Programmes)
- Special protocols on cooperation or memoranda of agreement
- Feasibility study
- QAU records

## Foreign Language Programme Compliance

### Findings

The overseeing Departments presented all the necessary documents substantiating the formal design and approval of the FLP. The design was based on a set of related programmes of foreign universities (we were provided detailed information and comparative analysis), and on the experience of the Department faculty. The programme consists of 240 ECTS spread equally in 4 years. The Department of Economics will offer 21 courses, the Department of Chemical Engineering 8 courses, and the Department of Mathematics will offer 3 courses. A voluntary, optional practical exercise (internship) is also available to the students for 3 ECTS, which can be completed in Greece or abroad.

The overseeing Departments have elaborated on the learning outcomes of the FLP as well as on the professional accreditations of the graduates (most are expected to return to their countries). A strong Advisory Board of the Economics Department will also be providing guidance on the progress of the FL programme.

### **Analysis of Judgement**

The members of the EEAP were provided with all necessary documentation regarding the design and formal approval process of the specific FLP.

At the beginning of the programme all courses are mandatory. In the future, when the programme reaches higher number of students, it could be necessary to introduce elective courses to accommodate two or three specializations.

### **Conclusions**

The programme is well-designed and ambitious, satisfying all requirements of Principle 3.

### **Panel Judgement**

<b>Principle 3: Design, Approval, and Monitoring of the Quality of Foreign Language Programmes</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### **Panel Recommendations**

**3.1** When and if the number of registered students increases, the programme should consider the possibility of offering different specializations.

## Principle 4: Student-Centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment

**ACADEMIC UNITS SHOULD ENSURE THAT THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE 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 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**

- *Operating procedure for managing student complaints*
- *Operating procedure for the function of the academic advisor*
- *Report on teaching methods and student assessment*

## **Foreign Language Programme Compliance**

### **Findings**

The programme will use a variety of innovative teaching methods to achieve the desired outcomes. Apart from the classic teaching method, the programme proposes the flipped classroom approach. Additionally, the programme builds upon a project-based learning method, a cooperative learning method and an inquiry-based learning method. At the same time, students will be attending research programmes, E-Con talks, Career Days, educational trips, and forums. All of them help students to be involved in the learning process.

The syllabus, E-class announcements, and announcements made by the instructor in the classroom provide students with information regarding the grading criteria. Student performance evaluation will consist of a variety of options, such as final and midterm exams, individual and team assignments, quizzes, and the presentation of the assignments. Furthermore, technology will be used. There is a lengthy list of software that will be used for learning purposes and a good number of applied courses that will use it.

Along with the above, the department will regularly evaluate the courses. Academic advisor for every student is a worthy feature of UOWM. Also, UOWM has an excellent procedure for complaints handling. Moreover, the unit will implement a Greek language course for foreign students.

## Analysis of Judgement

Student-centred learning is a hallmark of the programme, according to the unit's teaching staff. Students will be encouraged to participate and develop individual and team skills in various ways. Through a modern suite of software tools, students can enhance their digital skills and familiarize themselves with new technologies. Providing the Greek language course, the students can familiarize with the local population.

## Conclusions

This programme, as presented, has a very student-centred approach to address the needs of the student population. Following the beginning of the programme, it is imperative for the faculty to ensure that the University possesses the capability to effectively cater to the needs of the student population.

## Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 4: Student-Centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

## Panel Recommendations

**4.1** Keep monitoring the employed teaching methods addressing the evolving global socioeconomic developments and the requirements of the local community.

## **Principle 5: Student Admission, Progression, Recognition of Academic Qualifications, Award of Degrees and Certificates of Qualifications of Foreign Language Programmes**

**ACADEMIC UNITS SHOULD DEVELOP AND APPLY PUBLISHED REGULATIONS COVERING ALL ASPECTS AND PHASES OF STUDIES (ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, RECOGNITION OF STUDIES, AND DEGREE AWARD).**

*The internal regulations that govern the Foreign Language Programmes should regulate all the matters pertaining to these, from the beginning to the end of the studies. Indicatively:*

- *The admission criteria and the required supporting documentation according to the law*
- *The rights and obligations of students*
- *Internship issues*
- *The language of instruction*
- *Procedures concerning the award and recognition of higher education degrees, the duration of studies, rules ensuring students progression*
- *Terms and conditions for enhancing student mobility*

*Appropriate recognition procedures rely on institutional practice for recognition of credits among various European academic departments and Institutions, in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention. Graduation represents the culmination of the students' study period. Students need to receive documentation explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed (Diploma Supplement).*

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

### **Relevant documentation**

- *Internal regulation for the operation of the FLP (Senate decision)*
- *Regulation of studies, internship, mobility, and student assignments*
- *Diploma Supplement*

## **Foreign Language Programme Compliance**

### **Findings**

The maximum number of admitted students per academic year set by the FL Programme is thirty-five (35), whereas the minimum number of admitted and registered students for the sustainable operation of the programme is ten (10). The selection takes place among applicants from non-European Union countries with a high school diploma or a level 3 education certificate according to the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED). Among the documents required for admission is a certificate of English language proficiency. Other details related to students' admission are specified in the Programme Operating Regulations and posted on the programme website (<https://sdg.uowm.gr/admission/>).

At the beginning of the first semester of study, an orientation meeting will be held to inform all registered students about the procedures and operating regulations of the FL Programme. In addition, an academic advisor will be appointed for each student and who will assume academic guidance. The registered students acquire all the rights, benefits, and access to facilities

concerning matters of food, health care, academic ID card, assignment of academic advisors, and counselling.

The FL Programme study is clearly described in the Study Guide and consists of eight (8) semesters of coursework and laboratory exercises for a total of 240 ECTS. Practical training is optional and carries three (3) ECTS. All instruction is in English. There is no diploma thesis. The final course grades are obtained based on each student's score in course assignments, mid-term optional written examinations, and the final examinations. The terms governing the assignments, preparation, and grading are described in the programme Study Guide (<https://sdg.uowm.gr/study-guide/>).

Upon successful completion of the programme, the bachelor's degree (B.Sc.) in «Economics and Sustainable Development» is awarded by the Department of Economics of the University of Western Macedonia, with reference to two Departments that co-organize the programme (Chemical Engineering and Mathematics). In addition, the Diploma Supplement is issued in English. The FL Programme offers graduates career opportunities in both the public and private sectors of the economy in areas such as business administration, finance, banking, and financial advisory services. They FL Programme graduates can also be employed by research Institutes and Centres, regulatory authorities, public administration bodies, as well as in secondary education.

The Department cooperates with foreign institutions within the framework of the ERASMUS+ exchange programme. The academic community is informed about the mobility programmes from the University Erasmus Office website (<https://erasmus.uowm.gr/en/>). The Department maintains an office with a dedicated faculty for ERASMUS+ in coordination with the University ERASMUS+ office.

### **Analysis of Judgement**

The student admission criteria lack specificity and sufficient quality metrics which in turn will affect the quality of admitted students as well as their ability to successfully complete the FL Programme curriculum. Relative to the high school diploma/level 3 education certificate, the lowest acceptable marks for admission have not been specified. In addition, there is no admission test or any other means to assess the applicant's knowledge and preparation relative to the field of the FL Programme.

The FL Programme will provide the students with a strong theoretical and practical background in the field of Economics and Sustainable Development. The EEA Panel recognized the effective organization of the postgraduate programme and the quality of the regulations that promote academic culture. The rules and regulations that have been developed for this programme guiding admission, progression, recognition, and degree award to students are considered adequate, except the student admission criteria which are deficient as explained above. There are necessary documents that accurately describe all procedures for participation in the FL Programme, the rights and obligations of the students, as well as the assessment requirements. The above-mentioned information was further supported and enhanced through the discussions of the EEA Panel with the University and Department administration and FL Programme faculty members.



A more thorough, quantitative analysis of the FL Programme (e.g., grade point average of incoming students, percent of students graduating on time, number of students participating in the course/instructor evaluations, students' satisfaction, number of students electing practical training, etc.) was not possible as the programme has not started yet.

## Conclusions

The FL Programme has developed and published regulations addressing all aspects and phases of study (admission, progression, recognition, and degree award). However, the student admission criteria are somewhat incomplete. The rules and regulations that have been developed are considered adequate and the programme is in line with HAHE standards. The EEA Panel finds that the programme is substantially compliant with Principle 5, mainly for the deficiency of student admission criteria.

## Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 5: Student Admission, Progression, Recognition of Academic Qualifications, Award of Degrees and Certificates of Qualifications of Foreign Language Programmes</b>	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	<b>X</b>
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

## Panel Recommendations

- 5.1** More specific student admission criteria should be put in place to ensure admission of high-quality students, which in turn will ensure their ability to successfully complete the FL programme curriculum.
- 5.2** Student participation in the Internship training programme in the private and public sector is highly recommended.

## Principle 6: Ensuring High Quality of the Teaching Staff of the Foreign Language Programmes

**ACADEMIC UNITS SHOULD ASSURE THEMSELVES OF THE QUALIFICATIONS AND COMPETENCE OF THE TEACHING STAFF. THEY SHOULD APPLY FAIR AND TRANSPARENT PROCESSES FOR THE RECRUITMENT AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE TEACHING STAFF.**

*The academic unit and the Institution should attend to the adequacy of the teaching staff numbers, the appropriate student-teacher ratio, the appropriate categories of staff (and in the respective foreign language of instruction), the appropriate learning outcomes, a fair selection procedure, high research performance, training, an effective personnel development policy / participation in mobility schemes, conferences, and educational leave (according to the 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. It should 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, and promote the increase of the volume and quality of the research output within the academic unit. It should also follow quality assurance processes for all staff members (with respect to attendance requirements, performance, self-assessment, training, etc.) and develop policies to attract highly qualified academic staff.*

### **Relevant documentation**

- *Procedures and criteria for teaching staff recruitment*
- *Regulations or employment contracts, obligations*
- *Staff support and development policy*
- *Performance of the teaching staff in research and teaching*

## **Foreign Language Programme Compliance**

### **Findings**

The Department follows the well-defined transparent procedures, as imposed by government laws, to recruit qualified teaching staff. It is noteworthy that all the courses of the proposed FL Programme will be taught by the faculty members of the three collaborating departments (Economics Department, Chemical Engineering Department, and Mathematics Department). The list of academic/teaching staff, including their CV, their area of expertise, their education, and publication record is posted on the FL programme website (<https://sdg.uowm.gr/academic-staff/>).

All regulations and obligations of the teaching staff are those of the University of Western Macedonia, described in detail in the Institution's Internal Regulations (<https://www.uowm.gr/kanonismoj/>). There is an established procedure for further improvement of the teaching competence of the faculty through the University of Western Macedonia Teaching and Learning Support Office (<https://www.uowm.gr/en/teaching-and-learning-support-office/>). Even though staff mobility is encouraged, the actual use of such opportunities through Erasmus+, or other initiatives, is currently limited.

Evaluation of all teaching staff is accomplished via course/instructor evaluations conducted by the students anonymously using electronic evaluation tools in the form of detailed questionnaires developed by the University Unit of Quality Assurance (MODIP).

The faculty workload allows engagement in research activities. The programme promotes the interconnection of research and teaching. There is good potential for student participation in the research projects of faculty members.

### **Analysis of Judgement**

The expertise of the faculty is satisfactory relative to the scientific areas of the programme. In terms of research output, the mean h-index of the 19 faculty who participate in the FL Programme is 10.5 and 13.6 based on Scopus and Google Scholar, respectively. Given the research and publication trajectory of the Department, these metrics will improve. Examples of incentives and support which can lead to development of researchers and a higher research output are rotating sabbaticals, regular research seminars with internal and external speakers, mentoring of junior faculty, attendance of national and international conferences, participation in research training workshops, participation in external research proposal evaluations, participation in journal editorial boards, etc.

### **Conclusions**

The level of knowledge of the faculty relative to the scientific areas of the programme is satisfactory. A research strategy, which will enhance further collaborations among faculty members consistent with the FL programme themes and will ensure an increase in research productivity, needs to be articulated. Overall, the EEA Panel finds that the programme is fully compliant with Principle 6.

## Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 6: Ensuring High Quality of the Teaching Staff of the Foreign Language Programmes</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

## Panel Recommendations

- 6.1** Development of a research strategy leveraging the research interests of academic staff of the programme, while identifying future research trends in the field of Economics and Sustainable Development, should be considered.
- 6.2** Significant incentives and support should be given to the faculty to establish and promote research as well as increase research output.
- 6.3** Support high quality publications to promote the status of the programme and facilitate access to substantial research grants.

## Principle 7: Learning Resources and Student Support of Foreign Language Programmes

**ACADEMIC UNITS SHOULD HAVE ADEQUATE FUNDING TO COVER ALL THEIR TEACHING AND LEARNING NEEDS. THEY SHOULD PROVIDE ADEQUATE INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES FOR LEARNING AND STUDENT SUPPORT AND FACILITATE DIRECT ACCESS BY ESTABLISHING INTERNAL RULES TO THIS END (E.G. LECTURE ROOMS, LABORATORIES, LIBRARIES, NETWORKS, BOARDING, CAREER AND SOCIAL POLICY SERVICES, ETC.).**

*Institutions and their academic units must have sufficient funding and means to support learning and academic activity in general, so that they can offer to the students of the FLP the best possible level of studies. The above means include facilities such as libraries, study rooms, educational and scientific equipment, information and communications services, support, and counselling services. When allocating the available resources, the needs of all students -including foreign students- must be taken into consideration (e.g. whether they are full-time or part-time students, employed or international students, students with disabilities, etc.), in addition to the shift towards student-centered 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. Internal quality assurance processes should ensure that all resources are appropriate, adequate, and accessible, and that students are informed about all available services. In delivering support services, the role of support and administrative staff is crucial and therefore this segment of staff needs to be qualified and have opportunities to develop its competencies.*

### **Relevant documentation**

- *Insurance contract for foreign students*
- *Level, structure, and organizational setup of the Foreign Students Support Unit (Senate Decision)*
- *Administrative support staff of FLP (positions, qualifications, and responsibilities)*
- *Information material for the students with reference to the services provided (in English)*

## **Foreign Language Programme Compliance**

### **Findings**

The University of Western Macedonia provides students with many valuable services, which can be divided into categories. First, there is the accessibility centre for students of vulnerable social groups of the UOWM (MYΦEO), which:

- provides psychological support and counselling to university students of vulnerable social groups, students in general, the faculty and administrative staff of the university,
- informs and supports the faculty and administrative staff regarding the potential differentiating and inclusive strategies employed for students with disabilities,
- enhances the accessibility of students with sensory disabilities at learning and instruction through sign language interpreters and Braille translators,
- improves the accessibility of students with sensory and physical disabilities in the physical spaces of the university,
- supports the transportation of students with physical disabilities from and to the university campus,
- grants housing scholarships to students from vulnerable social groups.

Second, the University uses a newly created platform to support students in finding housing. Moreover, it uses many platforms of electronic services, such as e-mail, distance learning, VPN, electronic applications, VoIP telephony, Alumni network, and electronic secretary. All these are modern and useful solutions.

Furthermore, the university assigns an academic advisor who helps students with their needs and interests, helps with the transition from secondary education, and advises students about their career options.

In addition, there are many teaching classrooms and there is a branch of the central library in Kastoria that provides students access to many databases and financial data. The library provides access to publications, books, and academic journals.

Specifically, regarding the foreign language programme, the university provides some extra services to foreign students, such as support with their registration, visa and residence permits, and the relocation of the students and provides the students with a variety of insurance products to choose.

### **Analysis of Judgement**

Many facilities are provided to the FL programme students. The services provided to the students are sufficient and comply with the standards. The Panel was not provided with specific information about the knowledge of foreign languages of the administrative staff.

### **Conclusions**

The available resources and student support for the undergraduate FL programme mostly meet the expectations of the Panel members.

## Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 7: Learning Resources and Student Support of Foreign Language Programmes</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

## Panel Recommendations

**7.1** Ensure that the programme secretary/administrative staff have the requisite capabilities to provide the services to foreign students.

## **Principle 8: Collection, Analysis, and Use of Information for the Organization and Operation of Foreign Language Programmes**

**ACADEMIC UNITS BEAR FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR COLLECTING, ANALYSING, AND USING INFORMATION, AIMED AT THE EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT OF FLP AND RELATED ACTIVITIES, IN AN INTEGRATED, EFFECTIVE, AND EASILY ACCESSIBLE MANNER.**

*Efficient procedures for collecting and analysing information on FLP provide data to the internal quality assurance system. The information collected depends, to some extent, on the type of accreditation (initial, or re-accreditation).*

*The following are of interest: key performance indicators, student body profile, student progression, success and drop-out rates, student satisfaction with the FLP, availability of learning resources and student support, career paths of graduates.*

*During the initial accreditation, the data concerning the profile and structure of the FLP must be entered (National Information System for Quality Assurance in Higher Education - NISQA fields: M4001 - M4030, M4033 - M4038, and M4127 - M4133).*

### **Relevant documentation**

- *Report from the National Information System for Quality Assurance in Higher Education (NISQA) on the launching of FLP*
- *Operation of an information management system for the collection of administrative data for the implementation of the Programme (Students' Record)*

### **Foreign Language Programme Compliance**

#### **Findings/analysis**

The Department has processed data of interest gathered on an ongoing basis to serve its operational needs through the University's information system. Data will include student questionnaires, completion of studies and progress monitoring.

Student evaluations of individual courses/instructors will be conducted at the end of every semester. The assessment of the Panel includes:

- information related to the Programme of Studies,
- teaching resources and material,
- faculty members' performance,
- any other information related to the Undergraduate programme.

The evaluation results and student remarks will be examined by the OMEA and MODIP and will be submitted to the programme Director. Associated KPI's will be updated and also follow up implementation of results and feedback will be completed.

#### **Conclusions**

The Panel observed that the programme has an adequate data collection mechanism and suitable information processing capability to generate a variety of reports to statistically analyse, assess and monitor the results to implement its functions and policies in accordance with the requirements of the Quality Assurance framework set by HAHE.



### 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

**8.1** The panel has no specific recommendations for Principle 8.

## **Principle 9: Public Information concerning the Foreign Language Programmes**

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

*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 Foreign Language 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, as well as graduate employment information.*

### **Relevant documentation**

- *Dedicated segment on the official website of the Department for the promotion of the FLP*

### **Foreign Language Programme Compliance**

#### **Findings/analysis**

The programme has expended considerable effort in designing its website incorporating extensive, useful information including its mission, academic personnel profiles and functions, student services and research activity. The website is available in English in all sub links. The OMEA and the Secretariat of the programme are tasked with controlling the content of the website, each semester and the examination periods. The programme website could serve a dual role as an information tool and as an access portal to applications such as e-Class. The web application allows students to search for information about courses which are offered in the curriculum, instructor assignment to classes, a variety of course related issues, access grades for courses in which they have been enrolled and obtain a variety of other documents related to their academic endeavours. It also serves as a tool for electronic registration for courses each semester. The access to this application is simple, ensuring its confidentiality.

#### **Conclusions**

The Panel considers that the website is user-friendly, informative, and well designed.

## 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

**9.1** Strengthen the website to make it more accessible to foreign students and stakeholders.

## Principle 10: Periodic Internal Review of Foreign Language Programmes

**ACADEMIC UNITS SHOULD HAVE IN PLACE AN INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM FOR THE AUDIT AND ANNUAL INTERNAL REVIEW OF THEIR FOREIGN LANGUAGE 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 FLP aims 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 FLP in 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 FLP; the learning environment, support services, and their suitability for the programme; FLP are reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders. The information collected is analysed and the FLP 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 FLP, and the learning process*
- *Feedback processes on strategy implementation and quality targeting of the FLP, and relevant decision-making processes (students, external stakeholders)*

## **Foreign Language Programme Compliance**

### **Findings**

The FL Programme under review has a duration of 4 years. It is anticipated to start in the Fall of 2024. The programme has an obligation to conduct and produce an Annual Internal Evaluation Report, which is drafted following the legal requirements, as well as the guidelines of the HAHE. This is a new programme; thus, there is not yet a completed Internal Evaluation Report. The University of Western Macedonia is committed to build a culture of academic excellence through ongoing assessment efforts. The programme intends to conduct a well-defined internal review and evaluation.

### **Analysis of Judgement**

A formal Advisory Board specific to this programme has not yet been established. Such a Board would enhance the quality assurance procedures and bring into the programme valuable experiences from industry professionals and academics. By engaging with external stakeholders, the Programme can ensure that its study programme will meet industry standards and provide students with the skills and knowledge necessary for success in their chosen field.

It is understandable that since this is the first accreditation of the programme, there is no history of an internal review and its results. However, it is important to note that having a well-defined and well-described process is a good starting point for ensuring the success of the accreditation process.

## Conclusions

The internal review process will be conducted according to standards set by HAHE. Efforts should be made to enhance the necessary involvement of external partners (e.g., Advisory Board, MOUs, Scientific and Professional Chambers, Industry, etc.).

## 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

**10.1** Strategic actions to engage industry stakeholders and external academics should be promoted.

## **Principle 11: Regular External Evaluation and Accreditation of Foreign Language Programmes**

**FOREIGN LANGUAGE PROGRAMMES SHOULD REGULARLY UNDERGO EVALUATION BY COMMITTEES OF EXTERNAL EXPERTS SET BY HAHE, AIMING AT ACCREDITATION. THE TERM OF VALIDITY OF THE ACCREDITATION IS DETERMINED BY HAHE.**

*HAHE is responsible for administrating the FLP accreditation process which is realised as an external evaluation procedure, and implemented by a committee of independent experts. HAHE grants accreditation of these programmes, with a specific term of validity, following to which revision is required.*

*The accreditation of the quality of the FLP 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 recommendations submitted by the committee of experts for the continuous improvement of the FLP.*

### **Relevant documentation**

- *Utilization of the recommendations of the external evaluation of the academic unit and / or the Institution for the establishment and the continuous improvement of the operation of the FLP (reference to the action plan)*

## **Foreign Language Programme Compliance**

### **Findings**

The leading Department of Economics was evaluated successfully by HAHE in November 2022 and the Department appears to have responded satisfactorily to the recommendations.

There is a predetermined process for implementation of the recommendations of the external evaluation which starts with the Director of the FLP and the programme committee, drawing of a plan and evaluation every two years, and the production of a report for MODIP for further action.

### **Analysis of Judgement**

The Panel is satisfied with the pre-emptive stance of the overseeing Departments regarding the evaluation of the programme. These are plans which will need to be implemented when the programme starts.

### **Conclusions**

The programme is aware of the requirements of the external evaluation process and has prepared all documentation in line with the HAHE standards.

## Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 11: Regular External Evaluation and Accreditation of Foreign Language Programmes Periodic Internal Review of Foreign Language Programmes</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

## Panel Recommendations

**11.1** The Panel has no specific recommendations for Principle 11.

## **PART C: CONCLUSIONS**

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

- The University of Western Macedonia, and by extension the programme, are aware of the necessary documentation relative to quality assurance.
- The curriculum of the programme is well structured.
- The programme is addressing an area of need in economics, both in local and global level.
- The University managed to design an interdisciplinary programme based on the cooperation of three Departments.

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

- The student admission criteria are incomplete. The lowest acceptable grade marks for admission have not been specified.
- The initial threshold of admitted students (10) is low.
- There is a lack of student housing supply on campus.

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

- Develop more specific student admission criteria and metrics.
- Create an Advisory Board with external stakeholders from the economic and academic world specific to the FL Programme.
- Increase the geographical coverage for student recruitment.
- When and if the number of students increases, the programme should consider the possibility of developing different specializations.



#### **IV. Summary & Overall Assessment**

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, and 11

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: 5

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are: None

The Principles where failure of compliance was identified are: None

## The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname

Signature

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