



**ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ**  
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



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# Accreditation Report

## for the Undergraduate Study Programme of:

**Law**

**Institution: Aristotle University of Thessaloniki**

**Date: 22 May 2021**

Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the Undergraduate Study Program of **Law** of the **Aristotle University of Thessaloniki** 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 Undergraduate Study Program of **Law** of the **Aristotle University of Thessaloniki** comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

- 1. Prof. Dr. Stathis Banakas (Chair)**  
University of East Anglia, United Kingdom
  
- 2. Prof. Dr. Georgios Gounalakis**  
Phillips-Universität Marburg, Germany
  
- 3. Prof. Dr. Nikitas Hatzimihail**  
University of Cyprus, Cyprus
  
- 4. Prof. Dr. Sophie Papaefthymiou**  
Institute for Political Science in Lyon, France
  
- 5. Konstantinos Argyropoulos**  
Member of Lawyer's Association, Greece

## II. Review Procedure and Documentation

The External Evaluation and Accreditation Panel (Panel) was formed by the Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (HAHE) in March 2021, approximately two months before the review process. Due to the COVID-19 global pandemic all meetings were held through the Zoom electronic platform and the onsite visit was held by viewing a video prepared by the Law School of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (The Unit). The virtual tour provided an overview for Panel members to the School's classrooms, lecture halls, computer laboratories, administrative offices, meeting spaces, and the library.

The documentation that was received prior to the virtual meetings contains on the one hand HAHE material, and on the other hand material produced by the Unit. It also contained the Accreditation Proposal (The Proposal), which dealt with the ten (10) accreditation principles for the undergraduate Law Program (The Study Program). The material provided was comprehensive, informative and very well prepared. It adequately described the current program and practices that are in place. However, Panel needed and requested additional information, which was provided by the Unit on Thursday evening. Furthermore, Panel asked for and received copies of all the PowerPoint presentations.

The online visit took place in the week of May 17-23, 2021. Panel conducted online interviews through Zoom with various stakeholders including the Vice Rector, the Head of School, members of MODIP and all members of OMEA, members of the Faculty, groups of students selected by the Unit, alumni, and external stakeholders selected by the School according to the timetable of Panel Review by electronic means prepared by HAHE. Due to the online nature of the visit, the panel did not have an opportunity to interact informally with the broader student community. It was a pre-selected group of 12 students (a parity of men and women) who were pursuing their undergraduate studies under the auspices of the School. They represented various stages towards the completion of their studies (from 2<sup>nd</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> semester) and different concentrations. As a result, the students' contribution to the accreditation process is mitigated by the above restrictions. All online interviews ran smoothly over three working days.

Panel found the discussions to be collegial, constructive and productive and thanks the Unit and all those involved for making the process easier and for the constructive and trusting cooperation. Panel would like to particularly thank the Head of School for the warm, collaborative, purposeful and cordial reception afforded and the members of OMEA and MODIP for their cooperation, which greatly assisted the Panel in its deliberations. Finally, Panel would like to thank everyone involved in the process for earnestly sharing the Panel's commitment to constructive dialogue, transparency and inclusivity.

### III. Study Program Profile

The Law Department of the School of Law and Economics was founded in 1930 at the University of Thessaloniki (Aristotle University of Thessaloniki since 1954) and operated by the academic year 1930-1931. In 1999, the Law School expanded with the Department of Political Science and was renamed the School of Law, Economics and Political Sciences. The Department was transformed into a one-Unit School. Today, the Law School has six Sections, fourteen postgraduate programs of Studies (MSc), two Laboratories, three Jean Monnet Chairs, a unified Library, as well as the Centre for European Legal Culture. The School has eighty-two Teaching and Research Staff (DEP) members, six Laboratory Teaching Staff (EDIP) members, five research associates and twenty-three employees for the administrative support of the work of the School. The six Sections consist of the Section of Civil Law, Civil Procedure and Labour Law, the Section of Public Law and Political Science, the Section of International Studies, the Section of Commercial and Economic Law, the Section of History, Philosophy and Sociology of Law, and the Section of Criminal Law and Criminal Sciences.

The School has about 2500 active students (in total about 5300). The last revision of the Study Program took place 2018-2019. The Study Program evaluated in the present report is the Law Degree (Πτυχίο Νομικής). The minimum duration of studies is 8 semesters.

Obtaining a degree presupposes the attendance of and successful examination in fifty (50) courses, of which: Thirty-seven (37) are compulsory (188 ECTS) and thirteen (13) are elective courses (52 ECTS). Compulsory are the courses, the attendance, and successful examination of which is necessary for all law students. Elective courses are those that the student can in principle freely choose according to his or her personal interests. But they must choose: one General Education course, selected from four (4) offered; two (2) Interdisciplinary Seminars, one from each offered cycle of five Seminars; six (6) courses of Limited Choice of Special Knowledge, which are selected from thirty (30) offered; four (4) Free Choice courses of Special Knowledge.

Approximately 480 students successfully leave the School per academic year as graduates, the proportion of granting successful law degrees is around 75 percent. The duration of studies is on average 5.2 years, the proportion of students in the 4 years standard period of studies is 25 percent. Graduates may enrol as trainee lawyers. After taking the Bar, graduates may work as lawyers and they are also entitled to participate in national exams for the Judicial and Prosecutor Schools, for Notary Publics and the Diplomatic service.

In terms of student and Faculty mobility, the School cooperates with Universities in thirty countries worldwide, with the 7 Universities in the EPIKUR consortium (Umbrella Erasmus agreement) and participates in 125 Erasmus agreements with other European Universities. On average, 50 outgoing students and 75 incoming students participate in mobility programs annually. The language of instruction is Greek, but a range of courses (varies from 25 to 53) is also offered in English, French, and German.

## PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

### Principle 1: Academic Unit Policy for Quality Assurance

**INSTITUTIONS SHOULD APPLY A QUALITY ASSURANCE POLICY AS PART OF THEIR STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT. THIS POLICY SHOULD EXPAND AND BE AIMED (WITH THE COLLABORATION OF EXTERNAL STAKEHOLDERS) AT ALL INSTITUTION'S AREAS OF ACTIVITY, AND PARTICULARLY AT THE FULFILMENT OF QUALITY REQUIREMENTS OF UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS. THIS POLICY SHOULD BE PUBLISHED AND IMPLEMENTED BY ALL STAKEHOLDERS.**

*The quality assurance policy of the academic unit is in line with the Institutional policy on quality, and is included in a published statement that is implemented by all stakeholders. It focuses on the achievement of special objectives related to the quality assurance of study programmes offered by the academic unit.*

*The quality policy statement of the academic unit includes its commitment to implement a quality policy that will promote the academic profile and orientation of the programme, its purpose and field of study; it will realise the programme's strategic goals and it will determine the means and ways for attaining them; it will implement the appropriate quality procedures, aiming at the programme's continuous improvement.*

*In particular, in order to carry out this policy, the academic unit commits itself to put into practice quality procedures that will demonstrate:*

- a) the suitability of the structure and organization of the curriculum;*
- b) the pursuit of learning outcomes and qualifications in accordance with the European and the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education;*
- c) the promotion of the quality and effectiveness of teaching;*
- d) the appropriateness of the qualifications of the teaching staff;*
- e) the enhancement of the quality and quantity of the research output among faculty members of the academic unit;*
- f) ways for linking teaching and research;*
- g) the level of demand for qualifications acquired by graduates, in the labour market;*
- h) the quality of support services such as the administrative services, the Library, and the student welfare office;*
- i) the conduct of an annual review and an internal audit of the quality assurance system of the undergraduate programme(s) offered, as well as the collaboration of the Internal Evaluation Group (IEG) with the Institution's Quality Assurance Unit (QAU).*

### Study Program Compliance

#### Establishment of a Quality Assurance Policy

The Unit has established a clear and comprehensive Quality Assurance Policy Statement (QAPS) for its undergraduate Program. In p. 6 of the Proposal, the Unit lists eleven strategic goals, which correspond more broadly to the Unit's overall mission and not just the Program itself. Once seen in this light, however, the twenty actions to achieve the Unit's goals, outlined in p. 2 of the

proposal, provide a comprehensive agenda of strategic goals whose pursuance will have a significant impact on the Program of Undergraduate Studies. The QAPS includes an express commitment to continuous improvement and the Proposal in its entirety is a coherent elaboration on the Unit's effort to achieve these goals. Document B6 concerning Quality Goals is a concrete articulation of the Unit's quality assurance policy.

#### Promotion of continuous improvement

Continuous improvement appears to be a central preoccupation of MODIP, OMEA and the Unit's administration. Based on the data received, there is evidence that the process of quality assurance assessment and control occurs with sufficient regularity, good faith, and in a constructive manner. Drawing on the policies and work of the University-wide MODIP, the Unit is further supported by a very active, and well-structured, OMEA Committee. Both MODIP and OMEA hold regular meetings and are duly constituted to reflect their constituent body. The OMEA consists of one faculty member from each of the Unit's six subdivisions (Sections). All of them are mid-career faculty members (either tenured Assistant Professors or Associate Professors, all of them with several years of experience as Unit faculty members, beginning in the Lecturer position, and many of them with studies abroad): remarkably, this composition seems to have combined experience with motivation, which reflects in the material the Panel was presented with and the passionate manner in which the OMEA members sought to explain their work and respond to Panel's queries.

#### Communication of the QAP to all parties involved

The Unit elaborates on its methods for disseminating its QAP. The QAPS is supposed to be available on the Unit's website, along with external evaluation reports and the report of the Head of School upon completion of his or her term. The newly instituted policy of the Dean's Report being first presented for approval to the School Assembly should strengthen the sense of "ownership" of the report by the Unit and its faculty members. It must be noted that the web page originally indicated in the Unit's website (<https://www.law.auth.gr/el/node/5341>) only contains the 2013 committee report, the internal evaluation report of 2020 and a PDF document containing an unsigned statement about the very high place the Unit took in the QS World University Rankings 2018. A different page (<https://www.law.auth.gr/el/node/11291>) contains a statement as to the University's Quality Assurance Policy. The QAPS can be found, after some search, in another page (<https://www.law.auth.gr/el/node/11708>). This is a step to the right direction, but the Unit should include that link in its documentation and the page itself could provide further elaboration as to the means for (and success of) achieving Unit QAP.

#### Setting of Goals and KPIs

The Unit has set a list of nine concrete quality goals, which match to the Program's five strategic goals and give rise to twenty-seven Key Performance Indicators (KPIs). The document on Setting Quality Targets (B.6) clearly presents the causal relation between strategic goals, quality targets and KPIs. Comparisons between basis numbers and target numbers are easy to make and suggest a pragmatic ambition for the Unit. For each KPI, the Unit has articulated concrete actions, a timeline, and designated the body responsible for their achievement. This involves all levels of Unit governance. The Panel is moreover satisfied that the achievement of these goals



is appropriately monitored and updated, in a manner driven by the School leadership and OMEA/MODIP but involving all levels of Unit governance.

### Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 1: Institution Policy for Quality Assurance</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### Panel Recommendations

The Panel recommends that the Unit:

- Makes additional information about its QAP, including the QAPS, available on the pertinent page of its website.
- Re-organizes the lists of strategic goals included in the QAPS with a view to consolidation.
- Further publicizes the quality targets.

## Principle 2: Design and Approval of Programs

**INSTITUTIONS SHOULD DEVELOP THEIR UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMMES FOLLOWING A DEFINED WRITTEN PROCESS WHICH WILL INVOLVE THE PARTICIPANTS, INFORMATION SOURCES AND THE APPROVAL COMMITTEES FOR THE PROGRAMME. THE OBJECTIVES, THE EXPECTED LEARNING OUTCOMES, THE INTENDED PROFESSIONAL QUALIFICATIONS AND THE WAYS TO ACHIEVE THEM ARE SET OUT IN THE PROGRAMME DESIGN. THE ABOVE DETAILS AS WELL AS INFORMATION ON THE PROGRAM'S STRUCTURE ARE PUBLISHED IN THE STUDENT GUIDE.**

*Academic units develop their programmes following a well-defined procedure. The academic profile and orientation of the programme, the objectives, the subject areas, the structure and organisation, the expected learning outcomes and the intended professional qualifications according to the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education are described at this stage. The approval or revision process for programmes includes a check of compliance with the basic requirements described in the Standards, on behalf of the Institution's Quality Assurance Unit (QAU).*

*Furthermore, the programme design should take into consideration the following:*

- *the Institutional strategy*
- *the active participation of students*
- *the experience of external stakeholders from the labour market*
- *the smooth progression of students throughout the stages of the programme*
- *the anticipated student workload according to the European Credit Transfer and Accumulation System*
- *the option to provide work experience to the students*
- *the linking of teaching and research*
- *the relevant regulatory framework and the official procedure for the approval of the programme by the Institution*

### Study Program Compliance

The Panel perceives its role, regarding the Unit's Program of Undergraduate Studies, as limited to (a) ensuring that the Unit develops a Program of Study based on well-defined procedures; (b) that the Program of Studies compares favourably with appropriate and universally accepted standards; (c) that the structure of the Program of Studies is rational and clearly articulated; (d) that there is a procedure for periodic revision; and (e) that the Program of Studies is properly communicated to the various stakeholders. Submitting substantive recommendations for the reform of the Program of Studies is therefore not an essential part of its role.

#### Development of a Program of Study based on a well-defined procedure

The Panel must note the successful work undertaken by the Unit since the 2013 Panel visit. As the Unit's Proposal notes, the current Program of Study was developed following that visit in a process led by the Head of School, involving discussions with the totality of Unit faculty members, student and stakeholder feedback, and taking into account the Unit's potential and resources, both human and material. In its Proposal, the Unit provides concrete examples of that process (e.g. p. 6-7). Most importantly, the Unit's Proposal clearly sets and elaborates the

strategic mission and guiding principles of the Program (pp. 3-6). Prima facie, the Program seems to live up to these principles and achieve its objectives, especially when seen in context. The Panel finds that the Program of Studies has been designed, developed and constructed on the basis of a clear and comprehensive approach, which it reflects, represents, and consistently serves. This finding was further supported by the Panel's discussions with the Unit leadership, OMEA and members of the Curriculum Committee that has been since set in place.

#### Rational and clearly articulated structure of the Program of Studies

The structure of the Program is clearly articulated, both in the Study Guide and in the pertinent Unit documents and communications we have received. Most important for this specific aspect examined here, is that the structure seems to correspond to clearly defined objectives and values. Whereas the structure clearly reflects the individual culture and traditions of the Unit, the Program seems devoid of "fossils" and adhering, indeed implementing a concrete philosophy. The Unit also seems to have taken to heart the 2013 report's recommendations, with required courses being moved earlier in the curriculum (notably first and second year).

#### Comparability of the Program of Studies with appropriate and universally accepted standards / Rational and clearly articulated structure of the Program of Studies

The Panel finds that the Program of Studies compares favourably with the appropriate standards, especially when the logistics, social realities and the institutional framework of undergraduate education in Greece is considered. Prima facie, this is a rigorous program that achieves the immersion of undergraduate students into all basic legal fields, beginning with more or less introductory courses in the first semester, then quickly moves to the core doctrinal subjects and concluding with several "composite" courses (Σύνθεση/ Synthesis) in which students are called to revise the entire subject matter of the major legal fields, such as civil law, public law and procedure, criminal law and procedure, but also business law and civil procedure. Since 2013, the Program has been enriched with additional required courses on legal methodology and legal science. The Program also boasts of a massive number of elective courses that, on the one hand, should allow students to specialize and experiment and, on the other hand, enable faculty to teach smaller audiences more effectively. Drawing on international standards, the Unit should consider whether its Program would further benefit from (a) consolidation of some required courses, (b) consolidation of some elective courses, (c) enabling students to take more elective courses etc.

#### Procedure of periodic revision

A Program of Undergraduate Study is a living institution, and the Panel finds that the Unit seems to be understanding this reality. The Unit has provided us with written and oral evidence that a procedure for the revision of the curriculum of the Program of Studies has been put in place. Apart from the very active OMEA and School leadership, the Unit has instituted, a few years ago, a Curriculum Committee that consists of Faculty members representative of the 6 main subdivisions of the Unit (Sections) and appears to meet regularly. The Panel is satisfied that policies are in place in order both to make smaller, corrective changes in the Program and to envisage (and be able to implement) larger-scale periodic revisions. Such revisions also seem to take into account feedback from students and even stakeholders in the national and especially the regional level. Especially with regard to students, the Panel was provided with oral evidence (in

addition to the documented policies) of the operation of a feedback loop. The Panel notes especially the questionnaires handed to recent graduates with a view to providing a comprehensive evaluation of the programme and informing the revision process.

#### Communication of the Program of Studies to the various stakeholders

The Panel finds that the Unit’s Program of Studies is properly published and disseminated to the various stakeholders; the Student Handbook/Guide (Οδηγός Σπουδών), available in digital form, is complete, concise and appropriate to its mission. It offers students and other stakeholders a comprehensive understanding of the Faculty, including a sense of its history and the academic community it is supported by, the institutional organization of the Unit, and the variety of research, mooted activities that may benefit them. Even the brief presentation of the unit’s postgraduate Programs provides a sense of perspective to incoming and existing undergraduate students. Ecological and logistical considerations notwithstanding, a printed version of the Handbook could further strengthen this. The pertinent information is even more readily available in the Unit’s home page (<https://www.law.auth.gr/el/ugrad-programme>), which aptly divides the main areas of information into subjects, from regulations to the textbooks per course. Some of the linked material could be made easier to access.

#### **Panel Judgement**

<b>Principle 2: Design and Approval of Programs</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

#### **Panel Recommendations**

The Panel recommends that the Unit:

- Continues the rethink of the Program, making a more active comparison with international standards.
- Further formalizes the participation of student and stakeholder input in the revision process.
- Further improves the availability of the information to students and stakeholders, in an online and printed form.
- Considers how new technologies in student management (Specifically, electronic registration in courses, electronic filing of grades, and the ability of online monitoring of student performance and success towards degree requirements, by both student and faculty) may help achieve its own goals and national quality assurance goals while minimizing logistical friction.

### Principle 3: Student- centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment

**INSTITUTIONS SHOULD ENSURE THAT THE UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS ARE DELIVERED IN A WAY THAT ENCOURAGES STUDENTS TO TAKE AN ACTIVE ROLE IN CREATING THE LEARNING PROCESS. THE ASSESSMENT METHODS SHOULD REFLECT THIS APPROACH.**

*Student-centred learning and teaching plays an important role in stimulating students' motivation, self-reflection and engagement in the learning process. The above entail continuous consideration of the programme's delivery and the assessment of the related outcomes.*

*The student-centred learning and teaching process*

- *respects and attends to the diversity of students and their needs, enabling flexible learning paths;*
- *considers and uses different modes of delivery, where appropriate;*
- *flexibly uses a variety of pedagogical methods;*
- *regularly evaluates and adjusts the modes of delivery and pedagogical methods aiming at improvement;*
- *regularly evaluates the quality and effectiveness of teaching, as documented especially through student surveys;*
- *reinforces the student's sense of autonomy, while ensuring adequate guidance and support from the teaching staff;*
- *promotes mutual respect in the student - teacher relationship;*
- *applies appropriate procedures for dealing with students' complaints.*

*In addition :*

- *the academic staff are familiar with the existing examination system and methods and are supported in developing their own skills in this field;*
- *the assessment criteria and methods are published in advance;*
- *the assessment allows students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved. Students are given feedback, which, if necessary is linked to advice on the learning process;*
- *student assessment is conducted by more than one examiner, where possible;*
- *the regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances;*
- *assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedures;*
- *a formal procedure for student appeals is in place.*

#### Study Program Compliance

The large number of students enrolled at the Law School each year does not permit a learning and teaching process individually tailored to the needs of all. However, seminars (“Φροντιστήρια”) are meant to be concerned with learning difficulties. Students are also offered the possibility of choice among two or more teachers of the same course.

Teaching staff are available for discussion with students from 2 to 4 hours weekly; spontaneous communication is also possible, either before or after class. The limited conversation time with the students did not tell the Panel much about staff availability; the Panel presumes that

especially because of the pandemic, e-mail exchange has become the main mode of communication and all teachers respond to the students' questions.

The University has recently created the institution of Advisor, which is meant to take into consideration the problems and needs of students, and further improve the teacher-student relationship. A special office, dedicated to foreign students, guiding them and offering Greek language courses and a Committee for "vulnerable groups" have also been created by the University and the Unit respectively. It is therefore most probable that the above modes of communication will enable "special learning paths" if needed. However, the Unit has not provided evidence of the latter. Besides, it has not given sufficient information about the proper measures it has taken in support of individual students needing psychological assistance. As for vision and hearing-impaired students, there is adequate equipment in the Central Library, but not in the Law Library and the classrooms.

The Panel could not attend classes. The Unit affirms that the Regulation is enforced but has not provided evidence about teaching methods and has not shown any example of Syllabus, which is distributed in "most of the courses".

The Panel requires the distribution of a Syllabus containing the course description, its methodology, objectives and mode of examination, as well as a detailed program of each class, with mention of the links to reading material and, if necessary, of the material itself in all courses. The Syllabus should be distributed to the students before the beginning of the semester.

It appears that there is no compulsory attendance of class and no presentation of written homework in either compulsory or optional courses. The Panel requires compulsory attendance of training classes, reading of the distributed material for class discussion and presentation of research dissertations. The low assiduity of the students cannot inform the teachers about the students' special needs, e.g. difficulty in written or oral expression, in synthesis and analysis.

It is not "self-evident" that there is active participation of the students, as it is not "self-evident" that works of external authors, other than the teachers, are presented to the students just because this is prescribed by the law. The Panel would have appreciated the communication of examples from the Syllabus in order to be familiar with the relevant practice. It would also have appreciated justified answers instead of assertions like the one about the "self-evident presentation of works by third authors". It regrets that the Unit has not presented each course's number of research dissertations and their topics. Without evidence, the Panel cannot appreciate the "systematic" character of these works. Given the low number of students attending classes, it is presumed that students graduate without being trained in writing dissertations. This was confirmed by the Dean during the discussions.

The Panel suggests a change in the structure and teaching methods of all courses. The Regulation (art. 7 par. 4) concerns the compulsory courses, not the optional ones. Moreover, reference to the Regulation does not provide the necessary evidence about the Unit's practice. The students informed the Panel that the reading material distributed online during the pandemic consists mainly of excerpts from the teacher's textbook or monograph. The evidence was provided by the students' reaction to the Panel's question. No evidence has been provided about teaching during the pre-pandemic period.

Suggesting a textbook impedes wider information and discernment. Students are told by some teachers that they are “free to defend another author’s point of view as far as they can justify their point of view” but this is purely rhetorical: they agreed that they do not have the time to read more than one textbook when preparing their exam.

No evidence has been provided about the guidance and support of the students. The Panel thinks that the institution of “συγγραμμά”, i.e. a textbook or monograph, usually the teacher’s own, as is the practice in all Greek universities, does not enhance autonomy and critical thinking; on the contrary, it prevents the students from developing their own skills. The source of the problem lies in the State regulation of its distribution to the students. The abolition of this practice and its substitution by online presentation of several authors’ published works would avoid memorization in order to answer the exam questions and rather enhance training in asking questions. University is the place where students learn how to learn, and, if possible, how to think. It is therefore necessary to enable them to choose the doctrinal opinion which seems rational to them rather than reproducing the authority argument.

The Unit affirms that all compulsory courses are taught in three different groups by three different teachers. The Regulation (art. 6 par. 2) affirms that alternating teachers in each group is “imperative as far as possible” [sic]. Alternating teachers should be accompanied by the presentation of several authors’ published opinions.

No evidence has been provided about the effective familiarization of students with different doctrinal opinions. The Unit affirms that the students “Erhontai se epafi me dynatotita epilogis”, “enimeronontai”, without providing evidence about this vague mode of information. Students agreed that they do not have the time to read more than one textbook for preparing the exam. This means that choice is purely theoretical.

Regarding the “approval of the textbooks by the General Assemblies of the Sectors and of the Department”, the Panel does not doubt about the “substantial discussion” within the Assemblies; it is simply sceptical about the utility of suggesting entire textbooks and recommends the online presentation and compulsory reading of various excerpts. Besides, it is not convinced by the majority rule apparently applied in the General Assemblies.

The Unit has informed the Panel that it “regularly evaluates and adjusts the modes of delivery and pedagogical methods aiming at improvement”. The Panel could not attend any classes; besides, neither the students nor the alumni mentioned what pedagogical methods were applied. Therefore, it can only presume that art. 7 and art. 13 par. 2 and 3 of the Regulation are enforced. It would appreciate explicit mention of the different pedagogic methods which are applied by the Unit and illustrate academic freedom in the samples of student evaluation forms shown to it.

Art. 13 par. 3 requires the exam topics “explore the critical assimilation” of the taught material by the students; no evidence of this important teaching outcome has been provided. Moreover, art. 13 par. 2 and 3 deals only with compulsory courses. “Legal interpretation”, focus of the discussions with the Teaching Staff, is necessary but is not a “pedagogic method”.

The Unit evaluates the quality and effectiveness of teaching through student surveys. Students are invited to give their perception of the class during the 8<sup>th</sup> and “synithos” until the 12<sup>th</sup> week of the term. The participation in the evaluation process is about 30% and, judging by the very

few student answers shown to the Panel, they reveal some rather amusing misunderstandings. Indeed, none of the few samples the Panel received contains either substantial criticism or motivation for the praise given. Besides, the students are not asked whether, in their opinion, previous evaluations have been taken into consideration by the Unit.

Diagrams show that the “quality of teaching”, a vague notion used also by the OMEA in its report (p. 17), has increased during the last five years; this is positive feedback, most probably due to e-learning and the distribution of reading material to all students. Still, the index of the quality of teaching does not render this notion less vague.

The Panel doubts the possibility of evaluating a course when the students are still discovering the topic and especially, never have to prepare for the class.

The Unit understands students’ “autonomy” as the opportunity to take exams at any time during their study, with the exception of the “Synthesis” examinations at the end of the curriculum: indeed, students have to pass the exams of the components of the Synthesis before the Synthesis examination itself. Until then, there is no Progression requirement. This point will be more widely discussed under Principle 4. It is worth mentioning that both the Teaching staff and the students interviewed by the Panel associated the lack of Progression with “democracy”.

The Unit “promotes mutual respect in the student-teacher relationship” as several instances have been created for this purpose either by the Unit itself (gender equality committee, measures against Bullying and relative to Me Too complaints) or by the University (Advisor, foreign students’ assistance and guidance). However, the visibility and efficiency of these institutions is not known.

The Unit affirms that the students are given feedback on their own exam performance. It applies specific procedures for dealing with student complaints, as they are established by the Unit’s Regulation (“Κανονισμός”). Students have the right to complain about a mark received by reading their own exam and discussing with the teacher.

The Panel regrets that there is no examinations office which would also receive written complaints.

The methods of examination are mostly traditional. Students reported that they occasionally had to pass a multiple-choice question (MCQ) exam before the pandemic, that this type of assessment has been generalized during the pandemic and that they do not wish to be examined by means of a MCQ because of the risk of failure and also because they are interested in expressing their own opinion and in having the opportunity of reflection and judgment.

It appears that there is no training of the Teaching staff in using the electronic platforms, even though the Computer Service of the Unit is supposed to provide it regularly.

The mode of examination is made known to students at the beginning of term; students are allowed to choose between written and oral exams at the end of the classes.

The method and the criteria of selection (picking a letter at random to decide which 40 students will take the oral exam) seem to serve the purpose of giving both teachers and students the opportunity to choose the mode of examination they find most appropriate to their availability and oral skills respectively. If this is the purpose, then it seems to be attained. Still, it is



regrettable that no pedagogic reason was mentioned to justify the choice of examination method.

In compulsory courses the students must solve a practical problem and maybe also answer a theoretical question within two hours (art. 13 par. 2 and 3 of the Regulation). The Panel presumes that these modes of assessment allow students to demonstrate the extent to which the intended learning outcomes have been achieved, i.e. both knowledge of the field and practical application. As students “are taught how to interpret a legal text” the assessment should allow them to demonstrate the acquired skills.

Besides this, no information has been provided about the optional courses.

There appears to be no moderation or second examiner.

Practical problems are handed out on a form the students receive from the Faculty with blank spaces for the answer. Students are allowed to answer theoretical questions without restriction of length and use their own A4 sheets. Exams are not anonymous. The Unit thinks that they do not have to be, as teachers are impartial, and favouritism is possible even when the exam is anonymous.

The topics of the Synthesis are comprehensive, i.e. requiring in depth knowledge of every discipline under examination. In the case of the civil law examination, most recent, published Supreme Court cases, which may also be controversial, have to be discussed by the students.

The Panel thinks that published cases orient the students towards anticipated preparation of the answers while what has to be developed is independent judgment.

It presumes that similar topics are given in other fields’ Synthesis.

Some students reported that they prefer written to oral exams because the latter make them very anxious. The fact that the participation in oral exams is a choice does not mean that students should feel anxious in oral exams. It seems necessary to investigate the causes and the frequency of this anxiety and to proceed to the solution of the problem, by means of dialogue and psychological support as well as by informing the concerned teacher.

There appears to be no information on whether “the regulations for assessment take into account mitigating circumstances”.

The Unit affirms that “Assessment is consistent, fairly applied to all students and carried out in accordance with the stated procedure”.

The Panel thinks that the assessment’s “consistency” and the “fair” character of its application have to be defined by means of rational deliberation rather than majority voting in the General Assembly.

Moreover, while written exams are not anonymous, the oral examination takes place in groups and the mark given to each student is announced immediately after the end of the process. This reveals a discrepancy in the justification of written and oral examinations: the discussion with the teaching staff showed that the Unit is not interested in anonymity as this can be violated; at the same time, group oral examination is presented as a warrant of impartiality, because of the presence of witnesses (the Staff’s argument).

A general reply to the Unit's comments: No evidence has been provided about the Unit's compliance with the Regulation. The Panel could not attend classes and had to rely on the planned discussions with the Teaching Staff and the students. It would have been greatly appreciated if the Unit had provided definitions of the vague terms used in its comments.

If the Regulation, i.e. a normative text, was sufficient for accreditation no meetings would be necessary. Had the Panel proceeded to the accreditation of the Unit on the basis of the Regulation, every School would have received the highest marks.

Future accreditation procedures should deal with the implementation of the Regulation by the School.

Apparent repetition of the answers given in this reply is necessary because of the drafting of Principle 3 in the Template.

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

The Panel recommends that:

- The Unit caters to the psychological needs of the students (and academic /administrative staff) by appointing a resident psychologist.
- The Unit takes additional measures in support of persons with vision and hearing impairments.
- The Unit ensures the compulsory participation of the students in seminars, including the presentation of homework.
- The Unit ensures the online distribution of a Syllabus.
- The practice of distributing a textbook («σύγγραμμα»), usually the teacher's own handbook or monograph is abolished.

- Students' autonomy and critical thinking are enhanced thanks to the use of the maieutic method, even in classes with large audiences.
- Courses evaluation takes place during the last two weeks of teaching. Still, as long as active participation in classes is not compulsory it will be of minor significance.
- Rules are strengthened so that the participation in the exams of the students who have been enrolled for more than 9-12 terms could be allowed only for imperative and duly justified reasons.
- Solutions of practical problems are published online, with an invitation to the students to a public presentation/discussion of the theoretical questions.
- Strict anonymity of the written exams is ensured, with the Unit providing appropriate scripts, so that both the student's name and registration number are hidden.
- An Examination Office is created to deal with all aspects of the examination process.
- Rational deliberation on the necessity and availability of oral examinations.
- The opening hours of the Law Library are increased.

## **Principle 4: Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification**

### **INSTITUTIONS SHOULD DEVELOP AND APPLY PUBLISHED REGULATIONS COVERING ALL ASPECTS AND PHASES OF STUDIES (ADMISSION, PROGRESSION, RECOGNITION AND CERTIFICATION).**

*Institutions and academic units need to put in place both processes and tools to collect, manage and act on information regarding student progression.*

*Procedures concerning the award and recognition of higher education degrees, the duration of studies, rules ensuring students progression, terms and conditions for student mobility should be based on the institutional study regulations. Appropriate recognition procedures rely on institutional practice for recognition of credits among various European academic departments and Institutions, in line with the principles of the Lisbon Recognition Convention.*

*Graduation represents the culmination of the students' study period. Students need to receive documentation explaining the qualification gained, including achieved learning outcomes and the context, level, content and status of the studies that were pursued and successfully completed (Diploma Supplement).*

#### **Study Program Compliance**

The Unit has published detailed information on the rules and regulations of the Program.

The Unit's Program of Undergraduate Studies does not include the element of Progression. The Panel understands that this is underdeveloped across the Greek university sector. A change of culture is needed.

An important exception concerns the Syntheses, where success in all required courses of the field is a prerequisite for sitting in the examination. This implies an overload of work at the end of the curriculum when students have failed in these exams during the previous years. This is one of the reasons, although not the most important, of the majority of the Panel's insistence on the necessity of the system of Progression. Although progression is not part of every academic system in Europe, its adoption is recommended for pedagogic reasons. Students claimed that such a system would be contrary to democracy and their freedom of choice. In the view of the majority of the Panel, Progression should be the rule, with exceptions made for imperative reasons, e.g. medical, in which case a medical certificate should be required as evidence.

An argument put forward by Teaching staff was that the educational philosophy of the Unit system is not about providing information about legal rules but rather teaching a method of legal interpretation. In the Panel's view, it is precisely this philosophy that requires progressive familiarization with the field studied. Progression is necessary, as it will facilitate the learning process and enable students to learn the topic in depth without difficulty (e.g. from the General to the Special Part of the Law of Obligations). Indeed, the majority of the Panel expresses serious doubts about the possibility of acquiring a structured thought and an ability to reason without knowledge of the fundamentals.

Briefly, lack of Progression reveals a corner shop conception of university studies and reduces the University to a supermarket or even an e-shop and students to consumers.

Besides, the Panel thinks that it is the Unit's duty towards those brilliant sophomores, those "λαμπρα μυαλα" to inspire them and make them excel. The statistical data communicated show that only a very low number of students perform at their supposedly high and brilliant level and is worried about the lack of progress and even decline of all those who seem to have lost their abilities and ambition and are still allowed to graduate.

The Unit is in conformity with the European regulation on the credit transfer system (ECTS).

The Unit affirms that a Diploma Supplement is issued automatically to each graduate with their degree certificate.

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

The Panel recommends that the Unit:

- Introduces Progression in the study program (by a majority of the Panel).
- Creates an environment favourable to community life and provides students the feeling of belonging to it. The teachers' offices and the Research Labs look more like waiting rooms than working places. We did not see any book in them, maybe because the video was concerned with the aesthetics of the building and therefore should not show offices which the Panel presumes that are crowded by writing and reading material. However, offices without books and Research Labs without writing material cannot inspire the students. Impersonal, brand new installations cannot represent the University's history, identity and vision. Besides the already existing theatre group, students and Academic and Administrative Staff could e.g. form a chamber orchestra or participate in a painting and drawing competition so that aesthetic judgment and mutual recognition of the participants would be apparent throughout the Unit and enhance community spirit. Finally, students should be encouraged to participate in benevolent community activities

## Principle 5: Teaching Staff

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

*The Institutions and their academic units have a major responsibility as to the standard of their teaching staff providing them with a supportive environment that promotes the advancement of their scientific work. In particular, the academic unit should:*

- *set up and follow clear, transparent and fair processes for the recruitment of properly qualified staff and offer them conditions of employment that recognize the importance of teaching and research;*
- *offer opportunities and promote the professional development of the teaching staff;*
- *encourage scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research;*
- *encourage innovation in teaching methods and the use of new technologies;*
- *promote the increase of the volume and quality of the research output within the academic unit;*
- *follow quality assurance processes for all staff members (with respect to attendance requirements, performance, self-assessment, training etc.);*
- *develop policies to attract highly qualified academic staff.*

### Study Program Compliance

#### Recruitment of Staff

The Unit's accreditation proposal mentions several measures in force to safeguard fairness and transparency in the recruitment of qualified staff. These are welcome and enhance the Unit's academic standing. From statistical data supplied by the Unit both in writing and orally, it appears that recruitment is primarily and, for long periods of time, drawn exclusively from existing Faculty members who set in motion, as they have a right to do by law, the process of their promotion. Most, if not all new posts are advertised at the entry level of Assistant Professor. Those appointed at that level, have a statutory right to set in motion the procedure of their promotion after a certain period. At that moment, the post to which they seek promotion is advertised and external candidates may also apply. They rarely do. Also, external candidates are very rarely appointed to senior roles, such as Professor. This may be ascribed to issues beyond the Unit's power, such as unfavourable employment conditions, workloads and poor salaries.

As all Greek Universities are run by the State, improvements in these matters are in the gift of the Greek Government and there is very little that the HEI can do about that. In the opinion of the Panel, increasing the number of external applicants would have a positive effect on the diversification of the Teaching Staff and the learning and teaching experience provided. Information supplied, upon request of the panel, on recruitment of academic Staff by the Unit since 2017, shows a total of 15 posts opened. Three of these were for the promotion of internal candidates (Associate Professors) to the level of Professor. The internal candidates were duly elected, and there were no other candidates. Twelve more posts were opened since 2017 at the

level of Assistant and Associate Professor. Of these 7 were for internal promotions, and while two of these posts were not filled, the other 5 were all taken by the internal candidates seeking promotion. The other 4 were new posts, all of which were taken by internal candidates (Thessaloniki graduates). No new posts were opened at the level of (full) Professor. The Unit reports a persistent and total lack of interest in these posts from candidates overseas. It is noteworthy that only 10 out of a total of ca 80 academic Staff are not internal candidates. The Panel considers this to be a very unfortunate situation, as the Unit would obviously greatly benefit from opening up appointments to include external candidates so far as possible, in line with standard practices in most European Universities. The Panel are content to receive in the Unit's response to our Draft Report the assurance that academic appointments are made based on strictly objective academic criteria, with no favouritism to internal candidates. We are convinced of the high professional and ethical integrity of our colleagues in the Unit and these comments are not at all intended to cast any doubt on that. We are also convinced that there is no reason why the internal candidate cannot be, on the day, the best candidate. We are a little concerned of the apparent lack of interest from highly qualified external candidates, and the infrequency of opening up senior roles that might be more attractive to them. This is an area where the Unit can perhaps actively seek to encourage promising young talent to apply from Greece or abroad, by opening up more senior roles upon the retirement of existing staff.

#### Conditions of employment

Conditions of employment, as those of recruitment, are set by national legislation, applicable to all Universities (which the Greek Constitution dictates must be directly funded and governed by the State). Academics are civil servants. Conditions of employment include teaching, marking, research and administrative duties. Staff are obliged to self-certify at the end of the teaching period the total amount of teaching hours they have delivered. The legal framework within which the Unit operates is therefore strict. When a Unit such as this Unit, has a large number of students, the teaching and administrative load is considerable, and this may impact on research. As already mentioned, Teaching Staff salaries are considerably lower than the European average, and a large percentage of Teaching Staff are also practicing lawyers or doing other jobs to supplement their income.

#### Opportunities and promotion of the professional development of the teaching staff

The Unit does not report any process for the professional development of Teaching Staff. The Unit considers ERASMUS staff exchanges and attendance of international conferences, collaborative research Programs, inter-university agreements of staff exchange and the like, which are important, but there does not appear to be any special provision for classes, seminars, or other special events to support the continuing professional development of staff, possibly because of lack of financial resources.

#### Encouraging of scholarly activity to strengthen the link between education and research and innovation in teaching methods and use of new technologies

The Unit has adopted good practices of technological support in classrooms and extensive use of information technology for the delivery of teaching, teaching support and student information. The Unit should be lauded for organising all courses online during the COVID-19 pandemic. All teaching rooms are equipped with computer systems and power point facilities.

### Promoting the increase of the volume and quality of the research output within the academic Unit

The Unit reports that Teaching Staff carry out individual research, or research in collaboration with other members of the School or other Greek or foreign higher education institutions in their areas of interest. The Unit also asserts that the research and scientific work of the members of the Unit, as confirmed by the relevant quantitative data, is maintained at a high level both in terms of publications, but also in terms of its recognition. The research and scientific achievements of its academic and scientific staff continue to be high despite the constantly decreasing funding of Greek universities.

Research is therefore highly valued by the Unit and the research activity of Teaching Staff is extensive and well-recognised internationally. It is also evident that the financial support for Teaching Staff to make research visits and attend international conferences and other events, which is nearly zero, must increase. We are happy to add our voices to that of our colleagues that the Greek Government should increase research related funding to levels corresponding to those in other European countries.

### Quality assurance processes for all staff members (with respect to attendance requirements, performance, self-assessment, training etc.)

The Unit reports that it seeks to ensure that all Teaching Staff comply with their statutory obligations (systematic presence on campus in addition to teaching, participation in the collegiate bodies and other administrative tasks assigned to them) and it controls performance through a strictly organized administrative pyramid. The Unit operates a system of continuous student evaluation of Teaching Staff. It is noted, however, that the participation of students in the assessment process is much lower than expected, especially since the transition from print to electronic assessment. Despite the encouragement by Teaching Staff members (both oral during the lessons and written, through announcements), only a rather small percentage of students. Which, however, is high compared to other Greek Universities (not exceeding 30% of the enrolled in each course) completes the relevant questionnaires, and only 25-30% of them justify the grade given. The Panel notes in this regard a rather similar problem with student evaluations in other European Higher Education Institutions. In relation to this principle, good practices in Universities elsewhere in Europe include performance monitoring by the academic departments of their Staff, annual formal Staff appraisals, and regular formal peer review of teaching, as specific quality processes. We were not advised of any such practices adopted by the assessed Unit.

#### **Panel Judgement**

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



## **Panel Recommendations**

The Panel recommends that the Unit:

- Considers the introduction of performance monitoring of Teaching Staff, annual formal Staff appraisals, and regular formal peer review of teaching.
- Actively seeks and welcomes applications by external applicants for Faculty positions.
- Reviews teaching and administrative load of Staff, by reviewing the number of offered optional courses.
- Takes measures to strengthen the link between teaching and research, innovation in teaching methods, and the use of new technologies.

## Principle 6: Learning Resources and Student Support

**INSTITUTIONS SHOULD HAVE ADEQUATE FUNDING TO COVER TEACHING AND LEARNING NEEDS. THEY SHOULD –ON THE ONE HAND– PROVIDE SATISFACTORY INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES FOR LEARNING AND STUDENT SUPPORT AND –ON THE OTHER HAND– FACILITATE DIRECT ACCESS TO THEM BY ESTABLISHING INTERNAL RULES TO THIS END (E.G. LECTURE ROOMS, LABORATORIES, LIBRARIES, NETWORKS, BOARDING, CAREER AND SOCIAL POLICY SERVICES ETC.).**

*Institutions and their academic units must have sufficient funding and means to support learning and academic activity in general, so that they can offer to students the best possible level of studies. The above means could include facilities such as libraries, study rooms, educational and scientific equipment, information and communications services, support or counselling services.*

*When allocating the available resources, the needs of all students must be taken into consideration (e.g. whether they are full-time or part-time students, employed or international students, students with disabilities) and the shift towards student-centred learning and the adoption of flexible modes of learning and teaching. Support activities and facilities may be organised in various ways, depending on the institutional context. However, the internal quality assurance ensures that all resources are appropriate, adequate, and accessible, and that students are informed about the services available to them.*

*In delivering support services the role of support and administrative staff is crucial and therefore they need to be qualified and have opportunities to develop their competences.*

### Study Program Compliance

The Unit reports that the amount of human resources (academic and auxiliary staff) and material resources (teaching spaces) is insufficient to fully serve the educational needs of the Unit. Staff/student ratio, if all registered students are taken into account, is 1:66, dropping to around 1:35 if only so-called 'active' students are counted. The Unit also reports serious understaffing at the level of the School's Secretariat, which, among other difficulties, makes it impossible for the Unit to run an examinations office for the management of examinations.

The Panel takes this comment by the Unit seriously. Proper human and material resources are indispensable for ensuring high quality education. As the Unit is entirely dependent for financial support on the State for undergraduate programs, the Panel cannot but urge the Ministry of Education to pay particular attention to the lack of human and material resources and provide necessary funds to remedy it.

The Panel commends the Unit for making good use of the available resources, serving so far as possible the needs of all students, whether they are full-time or part-time, employed or international students, or students with disabilities, and student-centered learning is valued (see Principle 3, *supra*). A University Centre for Counselling and Psychological Support (KE.SY.PSY.) has been established to provide psychological support and assistance to students, as well as an Office of Accessibility for the disabled students, with the aim that everything that is constructed in the areas of responsibility of the AUTH is checked for accessibility standards. A Faculty Advisor and also a specific staff member of the Secretariat, can be contacted for any

issue. However, it appears that students make only scarce use of the services of Faculty Advisors, which, in any event, are very hard to perform properly with a very low Staff/Student ratio. There is no information in the Unit's Proposal on whether staff dealing with issues of student welfare are qualified and have opportunities to develop relevant competences. The Unit's Proposal does not contain enough information regarding the extent to which physical access to all teaching spaces is available to disabled students, although we were shown a lift in the lecture theatre building and a ramp at the entrance of the Law School.

The participation of groups of students at the School in mock trial and mediation competitions in Greece and abroad is promoted and actively supported by the Unit. The Unit always contributes to at least part of the students' expenses and makes available space and staff for the training of the teams (<https://www.law.auth.gr/el/node/8302>).

Turning to general teaching aids, the Panel was not able to cast an eye on textbooks offered to students or a comprehensive sample of lists of recommended reading materials in different subjects. For this reason, the Panel cannot comment on the quality/appropriateness of such materials.

Regarding the quality/appropriateness of lectures and seminars (*frontistiria*), the Panel was unable to access any online lectures or seminars. The Panel is of the view that the number of students attending lectures or '*frontistiria*' is quite large, far greater than most European Higher Education Institutions. This is, of course, not due to lack of effort by our colleagues in Thessaloniki, who do their best in light of the punishingly low student-to-Faculty ratio. This is an issue that the Ministry needs to address urgently.

Worth mentioning is the excellent Law Library, offering a substantial amount of printed (more than 120000 items), and online resources to all students and staff, reading spaces, inter-library loan facilities, as well as access to major national and international legal databases to all students.

In terms of internal quality assurance that ensures that all resources are appropriate, adequate, and accessible, and that students are informed about the services available to them, there is no information in the Unit's Proposal of a departmental system of quality control, such as a Teaching or Student Welfare Committee. It appears that the task of keeping the students informed is allocated to the secretariat and is performed mainly electronically on the School webpage. From our interviews with the students presented by the Unit, it was difficult to gauge if the student population is content with the level, timing, and quality of information about teaching and other activities communicated to them.

Both in the certification proposal (document B1, p. 25, section 6.3) and in the presentation of the OMEA (p. 42), reference is made to the Employment and Career Structure for students and graduates of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, which is also accessible to law students. However, it was not pointed out, as acknowledged in the Institution's official response to the Draft Report, that Professors of the Law Department are regularly appointed as advisors to the students of the Department within the framework of this structure, as is the case for all the Departments of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki. In addition, career events are held every year, both by the Central Office of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and by the

Department of Law, as a rule in the framework of the Department's cooperation with student groups, while the internship course plays an important role in facilitating the acquaintance of students with potential employers.

### Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 6: Learning Resources and Student Support</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### Panel Recommendations

The Panel recommends that the Unit:

- Revives, supports, and monitors the use of Faculty advisors.
- Ensures that faculty and Staff dealing with issues of student welfare are properly qualified.
- Reduces the size of classes and tutorials.
- Increases secretarial Staff numbers to allow the provision of essential services, such as an Examinations Office to manage examinations.

## Principle 7: Information Management

**INSTITUTIONS BEAR FULL RESPONSIBILITY FOR COLLECTING, ANALYSING AND USING INFORMATION, AIMED AT THE EFFICIENT MANAGEMENT OF UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMS OF STUDY AND RELATED ACTIVITIES, IN AN INTEGRATED, EFFECTIVE AND EASILY ACCESSIBLE WAY.**

*Institutions are expected to establish and operate an information system for the management and monitoring of data concerning students, teaching staff, course structure and organisation, teaching and provision of services to students as well as to the academic community.*

*Reliable data is essential for accurate information and for decision making, as well as for identifying areas of smooth operation and areas for improvement. Effective procedures for collecting and analysing information on study programmes and other activities feed data into the internal system of quality assurance.*

*The information gathered depends, to some extent, on the type and mission of the Institution. The following are of interest:*

- *key performance indicators*
- *student population profile*
- *student progression, success and drop-out rates*
- *student satisfaction with their programme(s)*
- *availability of learning resources and student support*
- *career paths of graduates*

*A number of methods may be used for collecting information. It is important that students and staff are involved in providing and analyzing information and planning follow-up activities.*

### Study Program Compliance

The operation of the information system of the Unit is based on the standards of the University-wide Quality Management System developed as an integrated information system. On a university level, the Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP) is responsible for ensuring and improving the quality of the management system.

The Internal Quality Management System has been certified as fully compliant with the principles of the Quality Standard of the Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency (HQA) and the Quality Standards of the European Higher Education Area (ESG). The relevant certificate posted in the AUTH site is valid until 09-09-2023 (prot. No: 11710/16-09-2019, duration of 4 years).

The Quality Management System consists of the following subsystems:

- Electronic Student Guide.
- Courses' Evaluation Questionnaires.
- Inventory Costs.
- Faculty Projects' Database.
- Quality Indicators.
- Statistic Records.

- Evaluation Reports.

Electronic applications operate under a specific AUTH platform, the AUTH Centre of Electronic Governance – it.auth. There is a single sign – in model for access to the platform organized under a one step to all services model that utilize university ID accounts of AUTH.

Each user must request access to [oauth.it.auth.gr](http://oauth.it.auth.gr) server and select his / her username and password to log in. As regards security policies there is a warning to the users that after successfully login, the user's browser will maintain the credentials valid to all cooperating websites and that in order to prevent unauthorized access to personal data after login, the user should logout for entrance to all cooperating websites.

There are also some security guidelines to the users so as not to provide their institutional account's credentials to webpages other than the ones ending at ".auth.gr", that their credentials will never be asked from the IT Centre of AUTH by any means and that a message that asks the user to provide credentials will be probably a phishing spam and the user is guided to delete it without responding. Finally, the user is encouraged to contact the AUTH IT Centre in case he / she has doubts about a message or website or thinks he / she has been tricked into submitting his / her password or personal information.

The various electronic services available and operating under a single platform with a unique access are:

- Student Information System – electronic assistance to students (<https://sis.auth.gr>) currently under upgrading process. Student Information System services require the use of the University ID. Students can access class and grade information and electronically enrol to classes (not activated for all departments).
- Faculty Information System – electronic assistance to faculty members (<https://faculty.auth.gr>) providing access to course information, class and grade list and the service for electronic submission of grades by making the use of a crypto token devise (not activated to all departments).
- Human Resources Information System of AUTH (<http://eadp.ad.auth.gr>) as regards the human resources management, budget, payroll, and financial transactions management, as well as the property management.
- Information System for the management of the maintenance or operation issues to IT equipment or IT infrastructure (<http://sintirisi.ad.auth.gr>).
- Electronic Document Management Service (<http://docs.auth.gr>).
- Institutional Repository of Scientific Publications (<https://ikee.lib.auth.gr>) operating as an open search engine of 137,765 records with the following categories: journal articles (53,688), Conference Articles (32,555), Books and other publications (15,544), Artwork and Multimedia (1,766), Technical Reviews (310), Theses (33,678) – PhD Theses (6,164), Postgraduate Theses (19,339), Graduate Theses (8,175) – and AUTH OpenCourses (224). As regards courses it should be noted that such courses are taught at the AUTH and are also publicly available in digital form under a creative commons license. These courses are categorized in three different types depending on the educational material included, which can be videotaped lectures, podcasts and presentations. This project aims to make knowledge open and freely accessible and follow the steps of the academic community worldwide.

- eLearning courses (<http://elearning.auth.gr>), available for AUTH members (under the electronic AUTH account) or non-members, having specific access upon registration and under codes provided by the Technical Support Services of eLearning.

Overall, compliance of AUTH Law School to this principle is high. Knowing that the Quality Management System compliance certificate is valid until 09-09-2023, the Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP) should take initiatives to organize the process of evaluating all systems in order to further enhance compliance and extend validation.

### Panel Judgement

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

### Panel Recommendations

The Panel recommends that the Unit:

- Updates the webpages and web environment of each application in order to be more friendly and easier to user access.
- Strengthens the security guidelines in all web applications services and provide security policies to the users.
- Includes data protection policy to each webpage of the web applications.

## Principle 8: Public Information

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

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

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

#### Study Programme Compliance

Information is available to various electronic applications with an easy access model. The basic web site of the School provides substantial information as regards the academic and research activities and is open to the public.

Data protection policy is available in the web site, as well as the Data Protection Officer's contact details.

The Student Guide is also available electronically and there is a selection criteria model to have easy access to the Student Guide and more specific information needed.

Communication is facilitated with email accounts provided by the University to students, faculty members, teachers, alumni, attorneys, members of other faculties and even judges, notaries and other professional groups. Social media accounts have been also created for communication with the alumni and promoting the activities of the research institutes.

It should be noted that the Unit also operates the electronic journal *Pro Justitia*, an annual web journal, which is easily visible in the School's central webpage. The scope of *Pro Justitia* is to make available the scientific and research work of the Unit but is generally open to faculty and postgraduate students of other law faculties, offering the option of four languages (Greek, English, French and German). Information is also provided to the public as regards the [Research Institute for Transparency, Corruption and Financial Crime \(RITCFC\)](#), the [Laboratory for the Research of Medical Law and Bioethics](#), as well as distance learning seminars in dynamic scientific fields like the Cybercrime, the Data Protection Officer and Compliance to the GDPR, the Education of Data Protection Officers, and with regard to the recently created Centre for European Legal Culture (CELC).

Students mentioned that all information they need especially for the study programs and courses can be easily available and the process to access the public information is satisfactory.



## Panel Judgement

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

## Panel Recommendations

The Panel recommends that the Unit:

- Upgrades or redesigns the School's website to provide public information in a more dynamic way.
- Makes more information available in a first level, without having to select the relevant category.
- Versions of the site in other languages, and not only in Greek and English, should make the site more attractive to international visitors.

## Principle 9: On-going Monitoring and Periodic Internal Review of Programs

**INSTITUTIONS SHOULD HAVE IN PLACE AN INTERNAL QUALITY ASSURANCE SYSTEM FOR THE AUDIT AND ANNUAL INTERNAL REVIEW OF THEIR PROGRAMMES, SO AS TO ACHIEVE THE OBJECTIVES SET FOR THEM, THROUGH MONITORING AND AMENDMENTS, WITH A VIEW TO CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT. ANY ACTIONS TAKEN IN THE ABOVE CONTEXT SHOULD BE COMMUNICATED TO ALL PARTIES CONCERNED.**

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

*The above comprise the evaluation of:*

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

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

### Study Program Compliance

The Unit has established an Internal Quality Assurance Unit (OMEA) which evaluates the quality of the Undergraduate Program on an annual basis in order to improve its overall operation and achieve the stated goals.

This procedure is conducted by the School and shared with the academic members and the MODIP. OMEA submits the annual Internal Evaluation Reports to MODIP, according to the provisions by Law 3374/2005. OMEA coordinates the evaluations of the program courses by the students through the special digital platform of MODIP. These semi-annual electronic course evaluations with closed- and open-type questions are accessible both to each faculty member, in terms of their own courses, and to the OMEA.

The Unit has chosen to check the program and its syllabus on an ongoing basis, so that the program of studies responds in the best possible way to the quality and excellence policy pursued, as well as to the needs of its students. The Unit has adopted and included in the Study Guide a system of continuous evaluation and reform of the program. The Unit's Action Plan for the evaluation and improvement of the program is integrated in the program. All changes in the undergraduate program are discussed by the members of the School's general assembly.

In addition to this annual process that can (as far as necessary) lead to a reform of the study program, an in-depth evaluation of the program has also been carried out by the Unit. In particular, it has been decided that every four years (hence the next time will be the academic year 2022-2023) the following actions, among others, will be taken: three questionnaires will be developed, under the responsibility of the School Program Committee, for the faculty members, for students of the last semesters and for graduates, seeking answers to questions about all

aspects of the study program. The questionnaires will be approved by the Assembly of the School. The questionnaires will be completed anonymously and sent to its Program Committee. The Commission will record the findings as well as the proposals made and notified by the Unit's Assembly as well as by the students.

The Unit recognizes in its Proposal that internal evaluation procedures help to achieve the learning outcomes of the study program and has underlined some key efforts already achieved (more details in B1 of Unit's material).

The Unit has established an internal process for the revision of the Study program. Regarding workload, progression and degree completion Panel understands that the School has to operate within the Greek legal framework. However, Panel believes, that - where possible - the amount of workload of students should be reduced. The Number of courses for the attendance and successful examination, in total fifty (50), is too high.

The quality and effectiveness are assessed by a questionnaire for each module, which contains closed and open questions. Panel commend this policy, especially that the completion rate (about 30 percent) is much higher than in other comparable Units (which range at 10 percent).

Assessment is carried out mainly by written and oral exams. There are processes for students to review their papers and receive feedback. Panel considers this is a good practice.

Concerning the learning environment Panel is impressed by the physical environment seen through the presented video. Especially the library and the services it provides to students and staff enhance their learning experience. But daily opening hours of the secretariat for students are too short.

### Panel Judgement

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

## **Panel Recommendations**

The Panel recommends that the Unit:

- Having undertaken important and positive changes in the undergraduate program since the first evaluation in 2013, continues with the excellent on-going and periodic review of the study program.
- Reduces the number of courses required for successful completion of the degree, from the present number of fifty (50) to forty (40) or even less would be helpful.
- Reduces the total number of elective courses offered and promoting stronger electives of more comprehensive content should be strongly encouraged. Such a development may also provide efficiencies in the light of the disconcerting trend of decreasing numbers of faculty members.
- Continues its efforts to reduce the number of students taking more than 5 years to complete their studies.

## Principle 10: Regular External Evaluation of Undergraduate Programs

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

*HAHE is responsible for administrating the programme accreditation process which is realised as an external evaluation procedure, and implemented by a committee of independent experts. HAHE grants accreditation of programmes, with a specific term of validity, following to which revision is required. The accreditation of the quality of the programmes acts as a means of verification of the compliance of the programme with the template's requirements, and as a catalyst for improvement, while opening new perspectives towards the international standing of the awarded degrees.*

*Both academic units and institutions participate in the regular external quality assurance process, while respecting the requirements of the legislative framework in which they operate.*

*The quality assurance, in this case the accreditation, is an on-going process that does not end with the external feedback, or report or its follow-up process within the Institution. Therefore, Institutions and their academic units ensure that the progress made since the last external quality assurance activity is taken into consideration when preparing for the next one.*

### Study Program Compliance

All staff members contributed to the review processes and evidence was provided that they appreciate the importance of both professional body accreditation and HAHE peer review. The current accreditation has benefited from the excellent function and effective interaction between various agencies and committees including OMEA, MODIP and HAHE. All members of HAHE, MODIP and OMEA should be praised for their diligent and synchronized efforts, especially for the impressive and well-prepared material granted to Panel that greatly facilitated the work of the Panel members. The Unit's internal evaluation committee OMEA has a continuous and productive collaboration with MODIP.

Panel drew evidence from representatives of all stakeholders (students, faculty, alumni and employers). The stakeholders have expressed their willingness to contribute to the program in various ways thus enhancing student education and career orientation.

The first evaluation of the study program took place in 2013. The Unit has been active in implementing the main feasible actions recommended by the previous external evaluation committee. The follow-up actions recommended by the first evaluation have been implemented impressively within the constraints of the Unit. The Program was well reformed during the last 8 years with the care of a small committee. The changes concern e.g.:

- the proportion of compulsory in relation to the elective courses in the number of the courses required to obtain the degree (37 compulsories versus 13 elective) has been strengthened, while care was taken not to increase the curriculum and to limit the total number of teaching hours,

- the "forward-looking" nature of the program was strengthened by the introduction of compulsory courses in the first two years and moving elective courses in the last years of study,
- the program has been established as a degree program with 240 ECTS,
- expected hours of weekly student attendance have been substantially reduced, getting nearer to the target of twenty-one hours per week,
- the learning objectives of each course have been clearly defined in the forms of MODIP,
- teaching material using e-learning has been coordinated, and the same is also true with the coordination of instructors teaching the same course.

The School has been so far active in implementing the main feasible actions recommended by the first evaluation. However, the proposal of the 2013 Committee, which concerned the restructuring of the academic staff, has not been addressed until now through strategic restructuring.

Also, there are no anonymous written examinations, which is a standard at European Universities.

### Panel Judgement

<b>Principle 10: Regular External Evaluation of Undergraduate Programs</b>	
Fully compliant	<b>X</b>
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

### Panel Recommendations

The Panel recommends that the Unit:

- Continues with the excellent quality assurance and in implementing all feasible actions recommended by the first evaluation of 2013.
- Set focus on restructuring of the academic staff through a strategic recruitment based on international standards.
- Thinks about establishing a Senior Professorship to attract foreign scientists on low-cost basis.
- Considers making active use of the institution of visiting professors.

- Ensures anonymous written examinations. The introduction of an examination office that ensures the anonymization of examinations is strongly recommended.
- Expands the opening hours and availability of the secretariat to students.
- A 5-to-10-year strategic plan could contribute to innovative thinking for the Unit of the quality of the program. Therefore, a strategic planning committee that would look into where the Unit wants to be 5 and 10 years from now, is recommended.

## **PART C: CONCLUSIONS**

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

Principle 1: Strong and comprehensive effort to develop, implement and monitor a Quality Assurance Policy; Excellent use of KPI Methodology in relation to Strategy Goals and Quality Goals/Targets; Synergies between MODIP and OMEA; Active OMEA;

Principle 2: Development of a renovated Program of Undergraduate Studies through a process involving the totality of the faculty and engaging with students and stakeholders; mechanism for continuous monitoring with a view to both small, immediate corrections and eventual, periodic overhaul of the Program of Studies; Use of new technologies to facilitate student enrolment and monitoring

Principle 3: Use of seminars (φροντιστήρια) to help with learning difficulties; availability of teaching staff via office hours; choice offered between sections of the same course; institution of student advisor introduced; active encouragement of student evaluation completion leading to increase in their number (decent by Greek, not international, standards); bodies created to deal with special aspects of student/teacher relation; institutionalized use of problem cases in final exams, in addition to theoretical questions; use of Synthesis courses at the end of studies;

Principle 4: Progression used for the Synthesis courses

Principle 5: The Unit values research; Extensive and internationally recognised research; Peer recognition of research; External impact of research.

Principle 6: Good use of the available resources, serving so far as possible the needs of all students; student-centered learning is valued; excellent Law Library.

Principle 7: The Internal Quality Management System of AUTH has been certified as fully compliant with the principles of the Quality Standard of the Hellenic Quality Assurance and Accreditation Agency (ΑΔΙΠ – HQA) and the Quality Standards of the European Higher Education Area (ESG). The relevant certificate posted in AUTH site is valid until 09-09-2023 (prot. No: 11710/16-09-2019, duration of 4 years). Electronic applications operate under a specific AUTH platform, the AUTH Centre of Electronic Governance – it.auth.

Principle 8: The Unit is compliant with regard to access to public information. The Unit's basic website provides extended information in various levels. The Unit's data protection policy with regards to the GDPR is available in the Unit's site, as well as the Data Protection Officer's contact details.

Principle 9: Excellent quality assurance; an in-depth evaluation of the program (every 4 years)

Principle 10: Implementation of the 2013 Report's most recommendations



## II. Areas of Weakness

Principle 1: The list of strategic goals included in the QAPS could be consolidated and there is some confusion between Unit and Program goals in the long list. More information (including QAPS) should be made accessible on the home page

Principle 2: More use could still be made of new technologies to facilitate student enrolment and monitoring and provide efficient tools to teaching staff.

Principle 3: Lack of anonymity of the written exams; lack of provision of Scripts; lack of Examination Office; lack of psychological support; lack of measures for the vision and hearing impairment persons; lack of Syllabus; lack of compulsory participation in class; the institution of “συγγραμμά” (the teacher’s own handbook or monography); student evaluation process begins too early during teaching term; lack of public presentation/discussion of answers to exam subjects; majority voting in the General Assembly instead of rational deliberation; students who have been enrolled for more than 9-12 terms can still sit for exams in any course; limited opening hours for the Law Library

Principle 4: Lack of Progression in the curriculum. Need to develop community life

Principle 5: Recruitment mostly limited to existing Faculty members; most, if not all new posts are advertised at the entry level of Assistant Professor; limited number of external applicants for Faculty positions, virtually no external appointments at senior level for some time.

Principle 6: Human and material resources, while well utilized, are not sufficient to fully serve the educational needs of the Unit. Size of classes. Lack of anonymisation of exams.

Principle 7: There are extended security rules and policies in the Unit’s Centre of Electronic Governance – it.auth platform. However, it is not clear whether the users are well informed in practice by the Unit to comply with such rules or not.

Principle 8: The Centre for European Legal Culture (CELC) does not have a webpage. The Unit’s website is only available in an English version, besides the Greek language version, and in no other major language.

Principle 9: Number of degree courses required for attendance and examination (50) is too high

Principle 10: Examinations are not anonymized; there is no restructuring of the academic staff through a strategic recruitment based on international standards.

## III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

The Panel recommends that the Unit continues its work towards identifying, re-evaluating and publicizing the Unit’s strategic goals and targets. The Unit deserves praise in this regard but should keep or strengthen its pace in the future (Principle 1). The Unit is especially encouraged to continue its strategic and functional rethink of the Program itself, notably by making more active comparison with international standards, considering the potential of new technologies in helping the Unit efficiently meeting its goals and KPIs and by taking further steps towards

further integrating the participation of student and stakeholder input in the revision process (Principle 2).

The Unit should also strive to make undergraduate study further student-centred by taking into account the needs of students (for example, psychological support by experts and help to visually and hearing impaired students), encouraging student autonomy and critical thinking, clearly communicating the rules and requirements for each course, enhancing the student-teacher feedback loop, inviting a rethinking of examination practices (including the rationality of oral examinations and the need for strict anonymity of written examinations), and making the examination process more efficient, notably with the creation of an Examination Office and standardised processes (Principle 3). Progression should be introduced and, on the whole, the Unit should strive to make the student experience more holistic and encourage student feelings of belonging to an academic environment, by increasing the element of structure while also creating a community-friendly environment (Principle 4). The Report recommends that the Unit reduces the total number of courses required to complete the degree requirements from fifty (50) to forty (40) (Principle 9).

The Unit should also take measures toward strengthening Teaching Staff performance, such as more regular monitoring and formal appraisals and ensuring the equitable distribution of teaching load among faculty members of all ranks and specialties, encouraging the recruitment of external applicants to all levels of faculty positions and strengthening the link between teaching and research (Principle 5). Steps to be taken towards enhancing student-teacher interaction include reviving the institution of Faculty advisors, reducing class sizes and reduce the administrative burden of faculty members by delegating non-core tasks such as proctoring to an administrative office, the Examination Office which is strongly recommended in this Report (Principle 6).

The Unit should also make its webpages and the web environment of each application more user-friendly and easier to access, while strengthening the security guidelines in all web applications services and clearly communicating to users data and security policies (Principle 7). The Unit should

upgrades or redesign the School's website to provide public information in a more dynamic and more broadly accessible way, such as by making more information available on a first level, without having to select the relevant category and providing versions of the site in other languages.

On the whole, the Report commends the Unit for its excellent work toward meeting the recommendations of the 2013 and promoting quality assurance. The Unit should continue to strive towards quality assurance and implementation of all feasible actions, including by embracing strategic recruitment, reforming the examination process (Examinations Office, anonymised written exams), expanding student access to administrative services and developing a 5-10 year strategic plan which could contribute to innovative thinking and a program meeting international standards (Principle 10).

#### IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

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

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: **3 and 5.**

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

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

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

## The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname

Signature

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