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

Food Science and Nutrition Undergraduate Programme

Institution: University of Thessaly

Date: …15 May, 2025……

Με τη συγχρηματοδότηση της Ευρωπαϊκής Ένωσης
ΕΣΠΑ 2021-2027
Πρόγραμμα
Ανθρώπινο Δυναμικό και Κοινωνική Συνοχή
enqa.

Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the New Undergraduate Study Programme in operation of **Food Science and Nutrition Undergraduate Programme** of the **University of Thessaly** for the purposes of granting accreditation

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PART A: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW

I. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the new undergraduate study programme in operation of **FOOD SCIENCE AND NUTRITION UNDERGRADUATE PROGRAMME** of the **UNIVERSITY OF THESSALY** comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

1. Prof. Athanasios Alexandrou (Chair)
   (Title, Name, Surname)
   California State University, Fresno, U.S.A.
   (Institution of origin)

2. Prof. John Floros
   (Title, Name, Surname)
   New Mexico State University, U.S.A.
   (Institution of origin)

3. Prof. Demetrios Kazantzis
   (Title, Name, Surname)
   Food and Beverage Consultants, U.S.A.
   (Institution of origin)

4. Prof. Amalia Tsiami
   (Title, Name, Surname)
   University of West London, U.K.
   (Institution of origin)

5. Mr. Stavros Korovesis, Undergraduate Student
   (Title, Name, Surname)
   Agricultural University of Athens, Greece
   (Institution of origin)

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

Please refer briefly to the Panel preparation for the new undergraduate study programme in operation review, as well as to the documentation provided and considered by the Panel. State the dates of the site visit and describe the visit schedule and the meetings held. Feel free to mention any additional information regarding the procedure, as appropriate.

The members of the External Evaluation and Accreditation Panel (EEAP) for the review of the new undergraduate study programme, Food Science and Nutrition Undergraduate Programme of the University of Thessaly were appointed by the Hellenic Authority for Higher Education (HAHE) from the Register of Independent Experts on 24 April 2025, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 and 4653/2020. The EEAP reviewed all the supplied documents (which we, as panel members, had pre-read and listed below in tabulated form) and agreed on the key questions and issues to focus on during our evaluation. The evaluation was based on the documents provided and the discussions held during the evaluation and took place remotely.

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The first day of the online meeting began on Monday, 28 April, 2025, at 17:00 (all times are in Greek time) with a private session of the EEAP members. During the meeting, the committee members were introduced, discussed the submitted file, and assigned responsibilities. At 18:00, the initial meeting commenced and the following faculty members and staff participated:

- Professor Ioannis Anagnostopoulos, Vice-Rector of Academic & Student Affairs and Quality Assurance
- Associate Professor Ioannis Giavasis, Head of the Department

They provided a brief yet comprehensive overview of the new undergraduate programme, including its academic profile, status, strengths, and potential areas of concern and they responded to the committee's questions. At 18:45, the EEAP met with representatives from the department, MODIP, QAC and OMEA. The participants included:

- Associate Professor Dimitris Makris, OMEA Member
- Assistant Professor Myrsini Kakagianni, OMEA Member
- Eleni Tsironi, MODIP coordinator
- Sofia Efthymiadou, MODIP staff
- Professor Ioannis Tsiropoulos, QAC Committee
- Professor Demetrios Kantas, QAC Committee

They provided an overview of the new undergraduate programme, including its academic profile, status, courses included, faculty recruitment, and potential areas of concern, and they responded to the committee's questions. On Tuesday, April 29, 2025, at 17:15 the EEAP met with faculty members. The participants included:

- Professor Konstantinos Polymeros
- Associate Professor Theodoros Goulas
- Lecturer Ioannis Giovanoudis
- Lecturer Theofanis Georgopoulos

- Lab Technician Christos Papaioannou

Subsequently, the EEAP met with nine (9) students representing all academic years. The students shared their views on the program and answered questions about the curriculum, course evaluations, accommodations, academic advisors, and other related matters.

At 19:00 the panel met with members of the department to discuss classrooms, lecture halls, libraries laboratories, and other facilities. The participants included:

- Anastasios Tsatsos, Administrative Staff
- Chrysanthi Mitsanga, Teaching Staff

At 20:15, the committee met with the following employers and social partners of the new undergraduate programme.

- Rodios Gamvros, President of the Scientific Committee of the Association of Greek Food Industries
- Ioannis Smarnakis, President of the Panhellenic Union of Greek Food Scientists & Technologists
- Stefanos Tzortziotis, Representative of Food Industry (VIOLANTA)
- Konstantinos Zygogiannis, President of the Chamber of Commerce of Karditsa

After a private meeting during which the EEAP members discussed the outcomes of the virtual visit, the EEAP held a meeting to discuss several points with representatives from OMEA & Quality Assurance Committee (QAC)/Quality Assurance Unit (QAU/MODIP). The participants included:

- Associate Professor Dimitris Makris, OMEA Member
- Assistant Professor Myrsini Kakagianni, OMEA Member
- Eleni Tsironi, MODIP Coordinator
- Sofia Efthymiadou, MODIP Staff
- Professor Ioannis Tsiropoulos, QAC Committee Member
- Professor Demetrios Kantas, QAC Committee Member

The entire process was conducted in a spirit of excellent collaboration. The faculty, staff, and administrators were helpful and transparent about the issues concerning the new programme, and they were highly willing to provide any additional information we requested. The Department was very responsive and forthcoming in providing the panel with additional material.

III. New Undergraduate Study Programme in operation Profile

Please provide a brief overview of the new undergraduate study programme in operation with reference to the following: history, academic remit, duration of studies, qualification awarded, employment opportunities, orientation challenges or any other key background information. Also, you may provide a short description of the home Department and Institution, with reference to student population, campus or any other facts, as deemed appropriate.

The University of Thessaly was established in 1984 by Presidential Decree 83/1984, which was subsequently modified by Presidential Decrees 302/1985 and 107/1986. Volos was designated as the central location of the University of Thessaly. Over time, the university has expanded with the addition of new departments in the four largest cities of the Thessaly region: Larissa, Trikala, Karditsa and Lamia. Its current academic structure comprises of sixteen departments and eight faculties, all of which were established by the end of the 2000–2001 academic year. As of the academic year 2024-25, the university has approximately 14,000 undergraduate students, 2,150 master's-level students, 1,400 doctoral students, and 710 faculty members.

The Department of Food Science and Nutrition at the University of Thessaly, part of the School of Agricultural Sciences, was established in 2018, beginning operations in 2019 in Karditsa. From 2005 to 2018, its predecessor, the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics, operated under the Karditsa Branch of the former Technical Educational Institute (TEI) of Larisa, which became the TEI of Thessaly in 2013.

The mission of the Department of Food Science and Nutrition at the University of Thessaly is to provide high-quality education and promote knowledge and research in food and human nutrition. Through its academic programs, the department equips students with comprehensive, multidisciplinary knowledge in fields such as food microbiology, chemistry, technology, health, and business. The department is committed to advancing knowledge and expertise in accordance with ethical principles, fostering an open academic environment for high-level research, ensuring teaching staff excel in education and research, and building collaboration with national and international institutions.

The undergraduate program in Food Science and Nutrition spans 10 academic semesters, requiring 300 ECTS credits, including a mandatory thesis in the 10th semester (30 ECTS credits) and an internship (10 ECTS credits). The curriculum includes compulsory and elective courses, with compulsory courses comprising approximately 80% of the total coursework. Since 2019, the department has enrolled approximately 100 students annually.

Graduates of the Department of Food Science and Nutrition are qualified to undertake activities such as investigating, analyzing, designing, implementing, supervising, operating, evaluating, and certifying processes in food science, nutrition, and related fields. They can register with the GEOTEE as Agricultural Scientists of Food and Nutrition Science, in accordance with the current institutional framework for graduates in agricultural studies, particularly Food and Nutrition Science.

The programme adopted the quality assurance policy of University of Thessaly. The purpose of this policy is the continuous improvement and assurance of quality across the institution.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

c. The documentation of the feasibility of the operation of the department and the study programme
The feasibility of the operation of the new department should be justified based on:

- *the needs of the national and regional economy (economic sectors, employment, supply-demand, expected academic and professional qualifications)*
- *comparison with other national and international study programmes of the same scientific field*

- *the state-of-the-art developments*
- *the existing academic map; the differentiation of the proposed department from the already existing ones needs to be analysed, in addition to the implications of the current image of the academic map in the specific scientific field.*

d. The documentation of the sustainability of the new department

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

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

e. The structure of studies

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

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

f. The number of admitted students

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

g. Postgraduate studies and research

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

Relevant documentation

- *Introductory Report by the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) addressing the above points with the necessary documentation*
- *Updated Strategic Plan of the Institution that will include its proposed academic reconstruction, in view of the planned operation of new department(s) (incl. updated SWOT analysis at institutional level)*
- *Feasibility and sustainability studies for the establishment and operation of the new academic unit and the new study programme*
- *Four-year business plan*

Study Programme Compliance

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

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

The Department of Food Science and Nutrition is part of the School of Agricultural Sciences of the University of Thessaly. The University has eight Schools (School of Engineering; School of Humanities and Social Sciences; Scholl of Physical Education, Sports Science and Dietetics; School of Health Sciences; School of Economics and Business Administration, School of Technology; School of Agricultural Sciences and School of Sciences).

The Department of Food Science and Nutrition is part of the School of Agricultural Sciences of the University of Thessaly. The School of Agricultural Science has four departments one which is the Food Science and Nutrition.

The Department of Food Science and Nutrition (TFDN) was established in 2019 (Government Gazette (ΦΕΚ) 13/29-01-2019), as part of the merger of the former TEI of Thessaly with the University of Thessaly. The scientific field of the Department falls within the internationally established scientific fields of higher education, as defined by the international categorization of scientific fields in education by UNESCO with the code "0721 Food processing" for the field of Food Science and partially the codes "081 Agriculture" and "051 Biological and related sciences".

The mission of the Department of Food Science and Nutrition is to:

- To offer high-quality education to tis students
- To promote knowledge and research in the field of Food and Human Nutrition
- To promote knowledge and specialisation with ethical standards and serve the needs of society
- To shape a free academic environment
- To conduct high-level research
- To ensure assurances that the teaching has the highest possible level for teaching and research
- To foster a culture of collaboration with educational and research institutions nationally and internationally

The primary goal of the department is the recognition and attractiveness of its ungraduated and postgraduate programmes achieving this within the next decade at the national and international level, as well as the international acceptance of its performing research work.

Graduates of the Department of Food Science & Nutrition at the University of Thessaly must have acquired knowledge, abilities, and skills:

Knowledge:

1. They should possess advanced knowledge and critical understanding of fundamental theories and principles to be able to apply specific scientific and theoretical concepts and principles in Food Science and Nutrition.

Abilities:

1. To be able to critically apply the knowledge they have acquired.
2. To have the ability to gather and interpret data in Food Science and Nutrition in order to form substantiated judgments based on scientific reasoning.
3. To be able to challenge established knowledge in a well-founded manner. Skills:
1. To manage complex technical or professional activities related to food and human nutrition.
2. Taking responsibility and making decisions in unpredictable work environments.

b. The strategy of the Institution for its academic development

To achieve the mission and primary goal of the University of Thessaly, the strategy adopted includes the following:

The Analysis of the Environment PEST (Political, Economic, Social and Technological)

1. **Political:**
   Continuous changes in the educational institutional framework: Frequent changes in educational policy by each Ministry of Education administration create instability in the educational system, directly affecting the strategic planning of institutions.
   Public funding: Institutions heavily rely on public funding for higher education. However, the distribution of funds is often based on irrational criteria, leading to operational difficulties.
   Number of undergraduate students: In recent years, the Ministry's policy of continuously increasing the number of undergraduate students in higher education institutions, without considering rational criteria such as infrastructure, student-to-faculty ratio, or credits proportional to student numbers, has created operational challenges.

2. Economic

Economic downturns affect decision-making at both the macroeconomic level (e.g., funding allocation) and the microeconomic level (e.g., families' ability to afford education).

Strengthening the connection between academic programs and employment opportunities could significantly motivate students' choice of study. Enhancing this connection, alongside promoting economic development to ensure job opportunities in Greece, will create strong career prospects compared to foreign markets and encourage graduates to remain in the country.

3. **Social**

   Obtaining a higher education degree is considered an important tool for success in the modern world, as well as a key component of social mobility in the Greek context

   Professional titles: Additionally, professional certifications from various organizations (such as CFA and ACCA), which are increasingly recognized by large businesses, may further diminish interest in postgraduate studies.

4. **Technological**

   Offering alternative solutions: The quality of online educational resources is improving rapidly and in many cases is free. This drives many high school graduates to skip further education to continue online learning, which dramatically affects the traditional sector of higher education in Greece and Europe.

   Extensive use of ICT for improving the educational process: Due to the rapid improvement of technology capabilities (e.g., Applications), many physical and intellectual resources are shared across various functions and activities of universities.

   New and emerging technologies: There is a rapid development of new technologies and technological applications for industrial and other uses, such as industry 4.0, 3D printing, augmented reality technologies VR, the Internet of Things (IoT), CAD-CAM systems, remote sensing technologies using drones, sensors, etc., which academic units must adapt to their operations in order to achieve optimal results in the learning process.

The strategic plan development process considered the needs of the national and international economy, similar programs from other departments, and technological advancements in the scientific field. It was based on the SWOT study carried out for the UTh.

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

The Department of Food Science and Nutrition of the UTh was established by Government Gazette (ΦΕΚ) 13/29-01-2019, as part of the merger of the former TEI of Thessaly, which operated from the academic year 2005-2006 until January 2019 in Karditsa, with the University of Thessaly. The former Department of Food Technology had high demand and a high number of admissions every year (approximately 100 actual admissions/year) and provided number of graduates to the national food industry and food analysis or sales companies. It was repeatedly distinguished in food innovation competitions (Ecotrophelia, organized by SEVT), both at the national and

European levels. As such the current department carries over the reputation of the past.

The purpose of the operation of the Department arises from the very high demand in the labor market in the primary and secondary (manufacturing) food production sector, which has significant development in Greece, particularly in Thessaly.

The department provides the rational for the unique provision among other institutions with similar subject, discussing the geopolitical positioning in the country and the focus in agriculture, food and nutrition.

d. The documentation of the sustainability of the new department

The department is based at a large building and important infrastructure. The area of the building is 2770sqm. There are 2 lab rooms for the food chemistry and molecular biochemistry, 1 lab for microbiology-biotechnology, 1 lab for organic chemistry, 1 lab for cell Cultures and contaminant analysis, 1 IT lab, 1 lab for cereals & bakery products, 1 lab from milk and dairy products, 1 lab of wine & beverages, 1 lab of Food processing, 1 lab of sensory evaluation, 3 further lab areas on general purpose. Further income is expected for instruments with the total cost 44.157Euros.

The Department since 2021 employs 10 Faculty Members (2 Professors, 4 Associate Professors, 2 Assistant Professors, 2 Lecturers), 1 Member of the Laboratory Teaching Staff (E.D.I.P.), and 3 Administrative Staff Members. The existing staff is supplemented by approximately 10 members of part-time teaching-research staff annually.

Financially the department receives financial support, especially new faculty members during the last 3 years, received 4 new faculty members.

The Uth provides library services, Wi-Fi provision for students, faculty and visitors.

e. The structure of studies

Theoretical and applied training is provided in scientific fields of food science and nutrition. The current curriculum is a five-year program and consists of 300 ECTS. It includes a final project (Πτυχιακή Εργασία) and compulsory four-month internship.

The program of studies includes 50 subjects, 12 of which are optional. The program combines 3 years of Basic Education courses, Agricultural Education courses, and Core Courses (mainly in the 3rd year). In the last 2 years, there is a combination of Core Courses, Agricultural Education, but mainly Specialization. For laboratory courses with significant laboratory-practical components, 3 hours of laboratory sessions are provided, while for most of the other courses, 2 hours of tutoring are scheduled (which can be in the form of theoretical practice in classrooms). It includes a mandatory Undergraduate Thesis (30 ECTS - chosen by the student and begins in the 10th semester) as well as a 4-month internship in the 10th semester.

f. The number of admitted students

Over the past four years, the department has accepted approximately 100 students annually. This number is comparable to the enrollment in similar departments at other Greek universities. The total number of students for the 2024-25 academic year is 680 undergraduate students.

g. Postgraduate studies and research

The department does not have a master's degree, whereas the other four departments within the School. There are nine postgraduate studies within this School. The vision of the Department of Food Science and Nutrition is to develop an integrated masters, as the number of ECTs comply with the inclusion of the MSc.

II. Analysis

The faculty comprises of nine members which is rather small considering the number of courses.

The facilities are used intensively to fulfil the department's teaching mission and provide an excellent environment for hands-on learning. In general, we find the department to be in a relatively healthy condition, with a curriculum that has a good balance between theory and practical experience. The number of classrooms and laboratories is considered sufficient for the number of students enrolled. The laboratory equipment is considered sufficient and appropriate for the courses taught and the research carried out.

Adequate administrative infrastructure (Γραμματεία) is in place. Two people work in this office and handle all the department's administrative responsibilities. Students can perform all essential interactions with the department's front desk using email and/or online applications.

During the committee's meeting with students, it was mentioned that the students were extremely satisfied with the advising they were receiving from faculty members. Based on the information provided and discussions with faculty members and students, the committee considers the functionality of the department's administrative services and infrastructure effective.

III. Conclusions

The strategy of the department aligns with the mission and objectives of the Uth. The facilities of the Uth are adequate for the course, however a pilot plant is not available for the students to enhance their experience.

Panel Judgement

Principle 1: Strategic planning, feasibility and sustainability of the academic unit	
a. The academic profile and the mission of the academic unit	
Fully compliant	**x**
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
b. The strategy of the Institution for its academic development	
Fully compliant	**x**

Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
c. The documentation of the feasibility of the operation of the department and the study programme	
Fully compliant	**x**
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
d. The documentation of the sustainability of the new department	
Fully compliant	**x**
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
e. The structure of studies	
Fully compliant	**x**
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
f. The number of admitted students	
Fully compliant	**x**
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	
g. Postgraduate studies	
Fully compliant	**x**
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

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

Panel Recommendations

R.1.1. Increase the faculty members to ensure a stronger curriculum

R.1.2. Invest on facilities that include the industrial pilot plant

R.1.3. Consider creating of academic student clubs where students can work on activities related to the club's focus. For example, a student club on Food Safety.

R.1.4. Consider creating a volunteering committee with industry representatives to advice on the direction of curriculum as well as supporting the access to internship opportunities

R.1.5. Bridge the research topics that are industry focused and link research suggestions from the industry

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

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

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

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

Relevant documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

The undergraduate program of the department of Food Science and Nutrition would achieve its goal by adopting contemporary and innovative international practices in its Curriculum. The department emphasizes the theory as well as the practice (laboratory skills and experience) by focusing on current trends in national and international level.

The EEAP finds the UTh compliant with the Quality Assurance and the Academic Unit principles.

The UTh has successfully implemented all necessary mechanisms and committees to ensure a robust, pragmatic, and actionable quality assurance process. This framework is grounded in current national legislation and aligned with relevant European directives. The establishment and full operation of the Internal Evaluation Group (OMEA) and the Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP) have enabled the General Assembly of the Department and the University Senate to adhere to transparent procedures that support the effective achievement of institutional objectives. These bodies play a pivotal role in overseeing and maintaining the quality of academic programmes and student services, thereby ensuring that the department's vision, mission, and values are consistently upheld and that students receive a high standard of education.

II. Analysis

The department demonstrates a strong commitment to a student-centred approach, as was evident to the External Evaluation and Accreditation Panel (EEAP) during discussions with students. These interactions revealed that students appreciate the learning opportunities offered and the high quality of teaching within a safe and supportive educational environment.

The Department has implemented a formal procedure for the submission and management of student complaints, specifically tailored for the Food Science and Nutrition programme, to further enhance operational effectiveness and support the educational process.

The academic staff exhibit strong dedication to their teaching and research responsibilities. They actively engage with institutional quality assurance procedures and, through continuous self-evaluation and reflective practice, strive for ongoing improvement and the delivery of high-quality education.

III. Conclusions

The Department has in place an Internal Quality Assurance System, specifically tailored for the Food Science and Nutrition programme, to further enhance operational effectiveness and support the educational process.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

R.2.1. To enhance student engagement and encourage meaningful feedback, departments should consider publishing the outcomes of student evaluations and the resulting improvements within each subject area.

R.2.2. Qualitative data could be collected on elements that are part of services offered to counter act the limited participation of students at the course feedback

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

Institutions should design the new undergraduate programmes following a defined written process, which will involve the participants, information sources and the approval committees for the programme. The objectives, the expected learning outcomes, the intended professional qualifications and the ways to achieve them are set out in the programme design. The above details, as well as information on the programme's structure, are published in the Student Guide.

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

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

Relevant documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

Within the University of Thessaly, the Department of Food Science & Nutrition (DFSN), or Τμήμα Επιστήμης Τροφίμων και Διατροφής (ΤΕΤΔ) in Greek, offers a 5-year (10-semester) program with many introductory courses in science, agriculture, and general education during the first 3 years of its curriculum, and many specialized courses in Food Science, Food Technology, and Nutrition during the final 2 years. The list of courses includes cutting-edge subjects such as Bioinformatics, Biostatistics, Molecular Diagnostics, and Scientific Writing. The curriculum includes a total of 60 courses, of which 8 are electives (from a total of 18 offered).

The program of study includes a large final project (Thesis), which is mandatory and must be completed during the 4th or 5th year, and a four-month long practicum, which is also mandatory and must be completed during or after the 10th semester. Student guides, course outlines, reading lists, Thesis titles, and Practicum information are all available electronically on on-line platforms and readily available to all students. The teaching staff set course structures and assignments as per other programs, building on experience from the previous program being replaced as well as from other programs offered. Courses are designed with experience from the previously existing program, and information gathered from several other sources, including community, social, and industry partners, and student feedback.

II. Analysis

The course curriculum builds upon other existing programs, and it is in line with current Institute of Food Technologists (IFT) academic standards, as well as with technologies, methods, and processes used in the Food Industry worldwide. The curriculum considers recommendations from community, social, and industry partners, as well as student feedback. Views from the latter are captured through semester assessments, so there is a systematic approach to the data collection. However, input from industry partners is not regularly collected, well organized, nor significantly considered during curriculum re-organization or course re-designing.

Similarly, some advanced and innovative aspects of Food Science and Technology, such as AI based tools and digital information sharing that are becoming vital in food production and throughout the global food chain must also be covered. Because this is a fast-evolving field, the External Panel wishes to emphasise the importance of keeping the curriculum up to date for the program to remain relevant. It was noted in the interviews with the faculty and industry partners that there could be benefits for the Department to create an External Advisory Board with members from the local, national, or international industry partners, as well as members from scientific or technical societies, and/or similar academic units from other Universities.

Most of the regular faculty members in the Department of Food Science and Nutrition have expertise and background in related subjects. Most of their research is also related to Food Science, Food Technology, and Human Nutrition. However, the small number of faculty, only

10 total, of which one is on an extended leave, and another is planning to retire at the end of the year, makes teaching so many courses nearly impossible, and mentoring/advising so many students very difficult. According to the faculty statements during the interview, the Department hires many temporary teachers on a yearly or semester basis to teach all the necessary courses/topics. Similarly, the existing regular faculty must work overtime, long hours and long weeks, to accommodate the mentoring and advising of all the students. The External Panel feels that this imbalance of faculty to student numbers will eventually result in burnout and reduced faculty performance. However, this can be addressed by increasing the number of regular faculty in the Department, particularly faculty with expertise in food-related areas, and technical support personnel for teaching laboratory-based courses.

For achieving the scientific and learning objectives, the background of the students in the Department is appropriate, but quite diverse in terms of expertise within food science related disciplines. The faculty may address this issue by seeking to balance the courses so that students with limited experience in a particular area can follow a certain course of study, while those with significant academic or practical background in a specific area can develop and gain new skills by following a different course of study. The External Panel finds that although the students were very positive about their experience in the Department, College, University, City, and broader Thessaly area, they may lack some necessary skills, and therefore, they must all be pushed to develop new and hone existing skills, regardless of their prior knowledge and experience.

The student workload is suitable and comparable to many other similar programs at the national and international level. The mandatory Thesis and Practicum provide excellent keystone and hands-on experiences. The External Panel considers a Thesis project focussed on specific local Food Industry issues as very appropriate for helping both the industry and the student. The industry may address some of the current problems is facing, while the student could use the experience to find job. The industry partners raised the issue of having regular courses and electives that better suit current needs in the Greek food sector, such as specific product development and legal issues related to Greek exports beyond the EU. Such specialisation would provide significant opportunities for the students. The External Panel, through the interviews, found that the teaching staff seek to link their research and interests to market needs and incorporate such information in their teachings. The procedure for approval or revision of the program provides for the verification of compliance with the basic requirements of the Standards by the Institution's Quality Assurance Unit (QAU).

III. Conclusions

The External Panel finds that the Food Science and Nutrition Department’s curriculum and course design has been developed following an established and working approach, with course structure and content building on previous experiences and identified needs. Delivery is in-person rather than in a hybrid or distance mode, as required by the guidelines. The External Panel finds that there is an opportunity to improve input from industry, and provide more elective courses, which would allow students to specialise in areas with notable shortfall in the Greek Food Industry. The External Panel suggests that the Department: (1) creates an External

Advisory Board to assist with regular input/guidance, and (2) adds several faculty positions to assist with teaching and mentoring, and reduce the possibility of burnout.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

R.3.1. Ensure that the curriculum is up to date by incorporating new technologies, such as various digital tools, in a systematic and ongoing manner.

R.3.2. Consider creating an External Advisory Board with members from the local, national, or international industry partners, as well as members from scientific/technical societies, and/or similar academic units from other Universities.

R.3.3. Increase the number of regular faculty in the Department, particularly faculty with expertise in food-related areas, and technical support personnel for teaching laboratory-based courses.

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

The academic unit should ensure that the new undergraduate programmes are delivered in a way that encourages students to take an active role in creating the learning process. The assessment methods should reflect this approach.

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

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

Relevant documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

The Department of Food Science & Nutrition delivers its undergraduate programme through a rich blend of lectures, compulsory laboratory classes, interactive case studies, e-class asynchronous material and a four-month mandatory practical training (internship – πρακτική άσκηση) in the 10th semester, enabling flexible learning paths and a strong link between theory and professional practice. Field visits to local food industries and research-based projects—presented by students in departmental seminars—further deepen experiential learning and cultivate critical thinking.

Students are treated as active partners. They evaluate every module online midway through each semester, and their anonymous feedback is systematically discussed by staff and the Internal Evaluation Committee (OMEA) to fine-tune teaching methods. A recently instituted annual award scheme honors both outstanding teachers and high-achieving students, reinforcing motivation, autonomy and mutual respect within the learning community.

Assessment practices are transparent and clearly aligned with intended learning outcomes. Course outlines and the e-class platform publish grading weights and rubrics from the first week, a fact confirmed by questionnaire item [M6] where students agree that “assessment criteria are known from the beginning”.

Quality-assurance data show that since 2021 student-satisfaction surveys have been administered each semester; typical participation ranges from 3.7 % to 13 %, with average overall scores around 4.0 / 5 for key teaching indicators. Although response rates remain modest, the exercise demonstrates a clear commitment to evidence-based improvement.

Every student is assigned an academic tutor; with nine permanent faculty members the average load is about 70 advisees/students per tutor. This personalized guidance is complemented by a comprehensive suite of University services—including the Student Ombudsman, Counselling Centre, Disability Office, Careers and Erasmus offices—that respect diversity and support individual needs.

A formal multi-tier procedure for complaints and appeals operates through the Student Ombudsman and the Departmental Assembly; information is readily accessible on departmental and University webpages, ensuring fairness and transparency.

Survey items related to mutual respect score consistently high (≈ 3.8 / 5), and the panel’s discussions with students confirmed a respectful, inclusive atmosphere in classes and laboratories.

Two operational challenges nonetheless temper the otherwise strong student-centred environment. First, the limited number of technical staff (ΕΔΙΠ / ΕΤΕΠ) strains the smooth running of intensive laboratory sessions; second, delays in appointing temporary lecturers meant that one course in the Winter 2024-25 semester began a week late. The Department’s preference for annual intake of 50 new students—aligned with its nine full-time academics (μέλη ΔΕΠ) and existing facilities—remains inapplicable, but further growth without additional support personnel could erode the quality of hands-on learning and timely course delivery.

II. Analysis

Strengths – The programme offers a robust palette of student-centred learning experiences: weekly laboratory exercises, case-based projects and a four-month compulsory practical training in the 10th semester link theory with professional practice. Staff routinely combine face-to-face teaching with e-class resources, interactive workshops and research-led projects, fostering active learning and critical thinking. Assessment rubrics and weightings are published from week 1 and are discussed with students, ensuring transparency and fairness. A formal survey cycle feeds evidence into the Internal Evaluation Committee (OMEA) and Departmental Assembly, while an annual Excellence Award for teachers and students strengthens motivation and mutual respect. These practices sit within a clearly articulated quality policy that foregrounds respect and continuous improvement.

Weaknesses – Student-feedback participation remains low, fluctuating between 3.7 % and 13.2 % over the last four semesters, which limits the representativeness of the data set. The

Department acknowledges a shortfall of laboratory technicians (ΕΔΙΠ / ΕΤΕΠ), and reliance on temporary lecturers recently delayed the start of one winter-semester course; both issues compromise the smooth delivery of hands-on learning. Each academic tutor currently oversees roughly 70 advisees—near the upper limit for effective personalised guidance.

Opportunities – Targeted investment in additional technical staff would immediately enhance laboratory throughput and student safety. Introducing mobile-friendly survey tools, pop-up reminders in e-class and small participation incentives could raise feedback rates and enrich the quality loop. The extensive network of local food-industry partners already supporting the placement scheme could be engaged to co-create capstone projects or guest-teaching modules, further diversifying pedagogies. Participation in multiple EU-funded research projects provides a platform for embedding cutting-edge content and digital teaching innovations into coursework.

Threats – Continued dependence on short-term teaching contracts and tight public-sector budgets may prolong staffing gaps or constrain the hiring of essential technicians. If annual admissions continue to rise beyond the departmental preference for 50 newcoming student cap without parallel increases in human and physical resources, laboratory crowding and tutor loads could erode the student-centred character of the programme. Competition from other national agri-food departments, many of which are expanding their digital-learning offerings, places additional pressure on the Department to sustain its comparative advantage in experiential learning and high staff-student rapport.

III. Conclusions

Overall, the Department of Food Science & Nutrition delivers its programme in a manner that clearly fulfils the principles of student-centred learning: students engage actively through laboratories, industrial placements and research projects; assessment is transparent; and mutual respect is embedded in academic culture. Nonetheless, low participation in feedback surveys and limited technical staffing occasionally constrain the full realization of these strengths. Addressing these operational gaps will consolidate the Department's solid foundation and further enhance the quality of the student experience.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

R.4.1. Consider increasing technical staffing:

- Recruit at least one additional ΕΔΙΠ and one ΕΤΕΠ within the next academic year to guarantee smooth, safe laboratory sessions and relieve faculty from routine lab preparation.

R.4.2. Boost student-survey participation

- Embed one-click mobile surveys in e-class,
- add pop-up reminders during weeks 9–10, and
- pilot small incentives (e.g. early release of sample exam questions) to reach ≥ 25 % participation.

R.4.3. Redistribute administrative workload

- Implement a student-assistant scheme (for senior undergraduates - e.g. 10 hours/month): interested undergraduates work a fixed number of paid hours per month in the Secretariat (filing, updating e-class, formatting survey reports). This will lighten faculty administration, give students insight into departmental processes and is likely to raise their engagement—and hence survey response rates. Reduce advisor load
- Aim for ≤ 50 students per academic tutor by (a) designating post-doctoral researchers or experienced PhD candidates as co-advisors and mentors, and (b) integrating digital advising tools for routine queries.

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

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

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

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

as well as

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

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

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

Relevant documentation

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

The Department of Food Science & Nutrition (FSN) has published—on its website and in the printed Student Guide—a complete set of regulations that govern every stage of the student life-cycle, yet the way these rules unfold in practice is affected by a student intake that is almost double the capacity originally planned. Although the Department annually requests 50 places, the Ministry ultimately assigns around 100–110 new entrants (e.g. 99 in 2023 and 110 in 2024). Newcomers register on-line through the University's "unistudent" platform, receive academic credentials, accommodation and catering rights, and are briefed on welfare provisions—including free health-care for uninsured students—outlined in the Student Guide's support section. An academic-advisor scheme pairs each student with a faculty member from the first week of studies, but the higher-than-planned intake means advisers typically oversee about 70 students each. Student progression is monitored electronically: advisors and the Secretariat have real-time access to grade-book data, while aggregated success rates feed into the Department's annual internal-evaluation process.

Mobility is promoted through a dedicated Erasmus+ page; in the last three years FSN recorded 13 outgoing and 7 incoming students, figures that, though modest, confirm the existence of structured procedures for credit recognition on return . The curriculum applies ECTS consistently: the five-year integrated programme totals 300 ECTS, with a 30-ECTS undergraduate thesis regulated by a detailed 19-page handbook that specifies eligibility, supervision limits, evaluation rubrics and formatting rules, and a compulsory four-month internship worth 10 ECTS in the 10th semester, whose operation is codified in the 2023 Internship Regulation.

Both regulations explicitly state that the thesis and internship appear in the bilingual Diploma Supplement.

The internship is underpinned by a network of food industries, chambers and public organisations, with clear institutional-funded and Erasmus+ pathways, on-line applications and jointly completed evaluation forms.

A presentation to the panel highlighted how the placement connects theory to practice and cited multiple industrial collaborations and competition successes (e.g. two European "Ecotrophellia" wins) as evidence of its added value for employability.

Overall, USP has in place transparent admission rules, systematic progression monitoring, formalised mobility and recognition procedures, and quality-assured thesis and internship frameworks; however, the gap between planned and actual student numbers stretches advisory capacity and laboratory resources and may eventually challenge the smooth application of these otherwise solid mechanisms

II. Analysis

Strengths – The Department operates with a full suite of publicly available regulations that map every stage of the student journey. Admission, progression, internship and thesis requirements are codified in dedicated handbooks that are easily accessed through the website. A digital enrolment and grade-tracking system gives staff real-time oversight of

progression, while each first-year student is paired with an academic advisor from day one. ECTS is applied coherently across the five-year, 300-credit curriculum, and both the compulsory 10-ECTS internship and the 30-ECTS thesis are quality-assured and appear in the Diploma Supplement . The internship is strongly embedded in the agri-food ecosystem: a formal network of local industries, ESF and Erasmus+ pathways, and clear evaluation forms ensure relevance and transparency; employers report that many interns are hired after graduation, and the Department's two European "Ecotrophellia" wins showcase the practical skills gained.

Weaknesses – Ministry allocations almost double the intake requested by the Department (e.g. 91–110 newcomers versus the 50 places sought), pushing the student-to-faculty ratio to ≈ 76:1 and leaving each academic advisor with about 70 advisees . Although regulations are bilingual, the individual course outlines are available only in Greek, limiting transparency for incoming Erasmus students and dampening outward mobility. Actual Erasmus flows remain modest (13 outgoing, 7 incoming over three years) despite the formal framework.

The Department was unable to confirm that the bilingual Diploma Supplement is issued automatically to every graduate, leaving a compliance gap with ESG 1.4. Finally, the industrial partners confirmed that curriculum co-design is ad hoc rather than systematic, and the two-way dialogue with the food sector could be stronger.

Opportunities – Translating all course outlines into English and publishing them alongside the Greek versions would immediately raise the programme's European visibility, bolster Erasmus exchanges and align documentation with Lisbon-Convention good practice. Leveraging the strong internship network to co-create capstone projects or micro-credentials with industry would strengthen relevance and deepen the currently one-sided dialogue. Finally, a short online tutorial on how to interpret the Diploma Supplement could enhance employer recognition of graduate skills.

Threats – Continued oversubscription without matching increases in laboratory space, support technicians or administrative staff risks eroding the quality of hands-on learning and timely graduation. Competing Greek and EU food-science programmes are increasingly delivered in English; if USP does not internationalise its teaching material, it may lose appeal to exchange students and research partners. Fiscal constraints in the public sector could delay appointments of replacement faculty or technicians, exacerbating the high staff-to-student ratios documented above.

III. Conclusions

In summary, the regulatory framework and experiential components (internship, thesis) give USP a solid structural base, yet over-enrolment, language limitations in documentation and modest mobility figures moderate the programme's full alignment with European standards and its aspiration to be an outward-looking hub for food innovation.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

R.5.1. Match intake to capacity (or capacity to intake).

- Begin a structured dialogue with the Ministry to reduce the annual intake to the 50 places requested or secure proportional increases in permanent faculty, laboratory technicians and administrative staff; the 2024 allocation of 101 places already doubles the design capacity and pushes the staff-to-student ratio above 70:1.

R.5.2. Publish every course outline in English, side-by-side with the Greek version.

- This low-cost step will improve transparency for prospective Erasmus students, facilitate outgoing mobility (credit mapping) and showcase the programme internationally.

R.5.3. Formally certify—and monitor—the automatic issue of the bilingual Diploma Supplement.

- The Head of the Department should submit the missing certificate to HAHE and establish an annual check (e-Secretariat report) proving that every graduate receives the Greek/English Supplement together with the degree parchment.

R.5.4. Deepen industry co-design of the curriculum.

- Convert the existing internship network into a standing unofficial Industrial Advisory Board that meets twice a year to review learning outcomes, propose elective topics and co-supervise thesis projects. Leverage the strong practicum framework (10-ECTS, 4 months, quality criteria spelt out in the 2023 Regulation) as a platform for this dialogue.

R.5.5. Raise mobility numbers through English-taught micro-blocks.

- Offer two or three 3-ECTS “short modules” in Food Innovation and Mediterranean Diet each spring; advertise them via Erasmus catalogues and waive local prerequisites to attract incoming students.

R.5.6. Close the feedback loop on practical training.

- Add a one-page employer feedback form to the practicum dossier and require academic supervisors to summarise key points in the Department's annual quality report; integrate these insights into the next curriculum revision.
- Try to incorporate the feedback and experience of the senior undergraduate to the website (e.g as a story-telling by some volunteers who want to share the experience under the sub thematic of student's practical training (Πρακτική Άσκηση Φοιτητών) at the departmental website.

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

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

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

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

Relevant documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

The selection and development procedures of the teaching faculty and research staff are strictly defined by the institutional framework of the ministry of Education. All selection and development processes of teaching and research members are carried out through a specific APELLA system. As for the temporary teaching staff this consists mostly of Ph.D. holders with educational, research, and professional experience. All faculty members are recruited through announcements for teaching positions of the University, either through the action “Acquisition of Academic Teaching Experience for Ph.D. holders” or through funding from the budget of the University and/or the Department. The qualifications and selection criteria are determined by

the respective announcement and evaluation of the research, publications, teaching, and professional work that are related to the subject of each position.

In order to attract high level teaching staff, the assigned committee seeks to properly evaluate candidates using objective and transparent criteria.

II. Analysis

In order to help improve the technical and teaching skills of the faculty, the University sporadically organizes, promotes, and encourages the attendance of optional training courses, such as seminars of online distance learning platforms or new differentiated teaching techniques. The "ACCESS" structure of the University assists teachers with teacher training seminars and with personalized guidelines regarding the education of people with disabilities or learning difficulties.

The teaching is linked with research through integrating research results into teaching. Teachers also update courses with the latest research results and trends in their field. Also, the usage of current research data is used in the teaching material. Courses offered focus on research methodology, critical data analysis, and interpretation of results. Students participate in research workshops or projects under the guidance of teachers, contributing to the introduction of new knowledge. Seminar offerings where professors and researchers present their research and discuss the findings with the students.

The research strategy is focused on all parts of the extensive food and beverage areas that are related to the teachers' expertise and interest of the students.

The teacher workload is very extensive due to the small number of teaching personnel and lab staff availability. The teaching staff is evaluated every semester but since it is performed electronically, the percent of evaluations is in the low single digits.

III. Conclusions

The above principle 6 fully meets the criteria for fully compliant according to the instructions provided by HAHE.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

R.6.1. The department is in urgent need of additional teaching and research faculty due to large number of students per class.

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

Institutions should have adequate funding to meet the needs for the operation of the academic unit and the new study programme as well as the means to cover all their teaching and learning needs. They should -on the one hand- provide satisfactory infrastructure and services for learning and student support and -on the other hand- facilitate direct access to them by establishing internal rules to this end (e.g., lecture rooms, laboratories, libraries, networks, boarding, career and social policy services, etc.).

Institutions and their academic units must have sufficient resources, on a planned and long-term basis, to support learning and academic activity in general, in order to offer students the best possible level of studies. The above means include facilities such as, the necessary general and specific libraries and possibilities for access to electronic databases, study rooms, educational and scientific equipment, information and communication services, support and counselling services. When allocating the available resources, the needs of all students must be taken into consideration (e.g. whether they are full-time or part-time students, employed students, students with disabilities), in addition to the shift towards student-centred learning and the adoption of flexible modes of learning and teaching. Support activities and facilities may be organised in various ways, depending on the institutional context. Students should be informed about all available services. In delivering support services, the role of support and administration staff is crucial and therefore this segment of staff needs to be qualified and have opportunities to develop its competences.

Relevant documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

The Department of Food Science & Nutrition (FSN) operates on the Karditsa campus in two adjacent buildings that house two lecture theatres, a suite of smaller classrooms and ten specialised teaching-and-research laboratories ranging from 5 to 45 work-stations each. The laboratories cover the full spectrum of food science—Food Processing, Chemistry, Microbiology & Biotechnology, Sensory Analysis, Grain & Bakery Technology, Meat/Milk/Fish Technology and others—providing purpose-built spaces for hands-on training with modern equipment:

A 20-seat Computer Science lab supports data-handling classes, while campus-wide Wi-Fi and the e-class Moodle platform ensure ubiquitous digital access for students and staff.

Facilities are scheduled centrally and distributed rationally: lecture halls run mainly 08:30-14:30, freeing afternoons for laboratory rotations; the larger Food Processing pilot area (45 places) accommodates cohort-wide demonstrations, whereas smaller labs host groups of 15-25 for safety-critical work. The Region of Thessaly has committed a new 6 000 m² "Διοικητήριο" complex to the University; once completed, it will relocate FSN and a sister department to a single, purpose-designed hub—an upgrade that the panel encourages to proceed swiftly.

Student-support structures are extensive. Accommodation: two residence blocks on campus provide 104 beds, allocated via an online application that prioritises social-economic criteria.

Boarding: two student restaurants offer breakfast, lunch and dinner every day with flexible hours and a weekly e-booking system.

Healthcare: uninsured students receive full NHS cover and an EU Health-Insurance Card for mobility periods.

Accessibility: since 2024 the University's Accessibility Centre operates as an autonomous service for students with disabilities, covering all five cities where branches exist.

Career guidance is delivered through the central Career Office, which organizes CV workshops, employer days and alumni networking.

Sports, cultural clubs and psychological counselling are likewise available through university-wide units; information on every service appears—in Greek and English—on the departmental "Student Welfare" menu and is highlighted during orientation week.

During the teleconference with students, students confirmed that they know how to access these services and praised the speed of the Secretariat in issuing certificates. They raised only one external constraint: after 17:00 the city bus from campus to downtown runs once per hour, which can prolong the journey home after late laboratory sessions; the Student Union has already communicated this to the mayor. Nevertheless, Karditsa's compact layout and bicycle-friendly streets mitigate the inconvenience. The same focus group illustrated active student participation: a Student Union delegate sits at every Department Assembly, and students routinely propose agenda items.

Administrative capacity is lean but competent. The departmental Secretariat counts three full-time staff members who handle admissions, records and Erasmus paperwork.

Technical support is provided by one ΕΔΙΠ laboratory instructor and one ΕΤΕΠ technician, supplemented by central IT and library personnel. While day-to-day operations run smoothly, the panel notes that the doubling of first-year intake (≈ 100 vs. the 50 places requested) places sustained pressure on both physical space and support staff.

II. Analysis

A SWOT analysis of the Department's learning resources and student-support provision reveals a balanced but finely poised landscape. The principal strength is the breadth of physical and digital infrastructure already in place: ten discipline-specific laboratories, two pilot-plant preparation rooms and five dedicated classrooms (total capacity 180) give students regular, hands-on access to modern equipment , while ubiquitous Wi-Fi, the e-class VLE and an institutional suite of online services—from electronic grade-book to Turnitin and Office 365—underpin everyday learning . Comprehensive welfare provision (housing, meals, health care, counselling, careers and Erasmus offices) is clearly sign-posted on departmental pages and in orientation events, and the University's "ΠΡΟΣΒΑΣΗ" accessibility centre assures parity for students with disabilities . Three experienced secretariat staff keep routine administration and certificate issuing running smoothly , and the active Student Union—represented at every Department Assembly—ensures that user feedback (e.g. limited evening bus frequencies) reaches local authorities in real time.

The main weaknesses stem from scale and resourcing: ministerial quotas have driven annual admissions up to 110, leaving roughly 76 students per faculty member and about 70 advisees per academic tutor.

Laboratory space, although adequate in number, is unevenly equipped—four of the ten rooms still lack full instrumentation —and the small secretariat and single laboratory technician risk overload during peak periods such as registration and exam weeks. Off-campus connectivity after 17:00 relies on city bus connection that runs only hourly, which can lengthen journeys home after late-day lab sessions.

Opportunities are on the horizon: the Region of Thessaly has pledged a new 6 000 m² "Διοικητήριο" complex to house the Department, a move that would consolidate teaching, research and student-service functions under one roof and allow the rational re-equipment of the four under-spec laboratories. Karditsa's bicycle-friendly layout and compact scale offer scope for a university-led bike-sharing scheme that would further mitigate transport gaps and promote healthy lifestyles. In parallel, embedding student assistants (on modest stipends) in the secretariat could both lighten administrative load and deepen learners' engagement with departmental processes.

Threats arise if these opportunities stall. A delayed relocation would prolong overcrowding and equipment gaps; continued over-enrolment without extra technicians or administrative hires could erode the current service quality; and constrained capital budgets might slow the replacement of legacy instruments. Left unchecked, such pressures could dampen morale among staff and students alike and gradually undermine the Department's otherwise solid, student-centred learning environment.

III. Conclusions

The Department currently delivers an overall satisfactory learning environment: well-equipped specialist laboratories, reliable digital infrastructure and a full suite of welfare services collectively support both academic achievement and student well-being, while an active Student Union ensures that learner voices are heard. Nevertheless, the persistent mismatch between planned and actual enrolment, the limited number of technical and administrative staff, and the partial under-equipment of several labs mean that resources are stretched to their operational limits. Timely completion of the planned move to the new 6 000 m² facility, coupled with targeted staffing and equipment upgrades, is therefore critical to safeguarding—and ultimately enhancing—the quality and sustainability of student learning and support under Principle 7.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

R.7.1. Consider strengthing the support workforce and introduce a paid student-assistant scheme. Add at least one extra secretariat staff member to cope with peaks (registration, exams, Erasmus paperwork) and pilot a system where senior undergraduates work 10 h/month on routine admin, gaining employability skills while lightening ΔΕΠ's staff workload.

R.7.2. Consider improving campus-to-city transport at peak times. Pursue the Student Union's dialogue with the municipality to raise the evening bus frequency to every 30 minutes; in parallel, explore a university-sponsored bike-sharing scheme that leverages Karditsa's bicycle-friendly layout.

R.7.3. Complete and commission the new 6 000 m² "Διοικητήριο" facility without delay. Set a firm timeline, secure fit-out funds and establish a move-coordination team so that all teaching, laboratory and student-service functions relocate in time for the 2026-27 academic year. This will relieve current space pressure and allow modernisation of four under-equipped.

R.7.4. Invest in staff development. Ring-fence funds and release time for technicians and administrative staff to attend specialised training (e.g., laboratory safety certification, digital-service management), ensuring continuous up-skilling in line with evolving student needs and educational technologies.

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

The Institutions and their academic units bear full responsibility for collecting, analysing and using information, aimed at the efficient management of undergraduate programmes of study and related activities, in an integrated, effective and easily accessible way.

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

Relevant documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

The Department of Food Science & Nutrition at the University of Thessaly collects and analyzes programmatic information concerning teaching, mentoring, student needs and performance, etc., through its own data collection systems and information systems available through the University of Thessaly.

The University of Thessaly has a range of tools to collect information on students, staff, infrastructure, the structure of the undergraduate program, the organization and quality of teaching, the quality of administrative services, and the quality of student support services.

These tools include the Integrated National Quality System (OPESP), the MODIP Information System (ΜΟΔΙΠ), the Quality Assurance Information System (P.S.D.I.P.), and the Support Center for Teaching & Learning (Κέντρο Υποστήριξης Διδασκαλίας και Μάθησης του Πανεπιστημίου Θεσσαλίας, ΚΕΔΙΜΑ, https://ctl.uth.gr/).

II. Analysis

The Quality Data Management System for Higher Education Institutions was implemented as part of the Integrated National Quality System (OPESP) to facilitate the collection of quantitative data from Higher Education Institutions. One of its goals is to support the certification processes of study programs and internal quality assurance systems, including MODIP and other quality assurance processes. Primary quantitative data is processed to generate reports that facilitate the analysis and presentation of data with a focus on ensuring quality. The data recorded are quantitative and include information about undergraduate and postgraduate programs. However, it is noted that, although the University of Thessaly may have designed certain Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), the External Panel found no evidence of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) designed specifically for the department itself.

The MODIP Information System is an important tool of the Department's OMEA for collecting, recording, and documenting information related to the Department's educational, research, and administrative services. This includes designing and creating questionnaires for students and faculty members, securing the entry of standardized inventory data, reliably processing/managing results, and generating reports in various formats.

The data collected by OMEA undergoes statistical analysis and is used to improve the program. The information collected and analyzed includes:

- Students (e.g., number of enrolled students, teaching evaluation questionnaires per course/semester, grade data processing, study duration, exam attendance, success rates, dropout rates, etc.)
- Faculty members (e.g., inventory forms, publications, teaching hours, distinctions, participation in research projects, citations, etc.)
- Administration (e.g., inventory forms, calculation of administrative obligations, general evaluation questionnaires on administrative and support services from students, etc.)
- Course structure, organization, and content
- Student services, availability of learning resources, and student support
- Graduates' career paths, employment positions, and their demand in the labor market

OMEA's role is both coordinating and executive, as it is responsible for the design, organization, and systematic monitoring of the internal and external evaluation processes.

As part of the internal evaluation process, OMEA monitors the completion of questionnaires, informs department members about responses, and publishes the results. It is noted that the teaching evaluation questionnaires for specific courses in the program, submitted electronically by students, have shown very low student participation (in some cases less than 3% of the total number of students evaluated a certain course). This is a widespread problem recognized throughout the academic communities in Greece and internationally. Nevertheless, the External Panel urges the Department to address the issue as soon as possible by (1) encouraging all students to participate and fill out the questionnaires (and remind them often); and (2) explore other ways to gain meaningful student feedback.

III. Conclusions

The Department of Food Science & Nutrition uses various methods to collect and analyze data. It operates several integrated information systems properly developed by the University of Thessaly and national authorities.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

R.8.1. Design specific Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for the Department.

R.8.2. Due to low number of students evaluating the teaching and learning performance of specific courses, encourage – and remind – all students to participate by filling out the questionnaires; and explore other ways to gain meaningful student feedback.

Principle 9: Public Information Concerning the New Undergraduate Programmes

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

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

Relevant documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

The new department of Food Science and Human Nutrition at the University of Thessaly offers 5 years of study in ten semesters. The first two years include introductory agricultural courses and the following 3 years of study concentrate in specialization in the areas of food science and nutrition. The subjects taught are related to processing, food safety, and quality. They examine food as a whole through an integrated and holistic approach from farm to fork within the framework of both national and community strategy.

The course work has no mandatory attendance. Many courses offer laboratory training, of which the attendance is mandatory.

All course outlines are complete and on the department's website. The quality assurance policy is also available online. All published information is clear but sometimes not easily accessible.

The practical exercise is mandatory and lasts 4 months in the 10th semester, providing students first experience hands on with the related food industry.

Teaching staff's CV's, number of degrees awarded yearly, mode of attendance, and courses offered are available online.

II. Analysis

The quality assurance unit of the University of Thessaly aims to develop a quality culture in the academic community to transmit knowledge through efficient teaching and produce a high level of know-how with innovative research, aiming for excellence in competing in the national and international arena with high quality, recognized research.

Quality assurance aims to evaluate the departments work and formulate directions and strategies for education and research quality improvement.

Also, the mission includes the recording, understanding, and systematic evaluation of the work in the context of quality assurance and optimal efficiency with the main goal of strengthening the department overall.

III. Conclusions

The above principle 9 fully meets the criteria for fully compliant according to the instructions provided by HAHE.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

R.9.1. Improve accessibility of online published information. Published information online sometimes is difficult to locate.

Principle 10: Periodic Internal Review of the New Study Programmes

Institutions and academic units should have in place an internal quality assurance system, for the audit and annual internal review of their new programmes, so as to achieve the objectives set for them, through monitoring and amendments, with a view to continuous improvement. Any actions taken in the above context, should be communicated to all parties concerned.

Regular monitoring, review and revision of the new study programmes aim at maintaining the level of educational provision and creating a supportive and effective learning environment for students. The above comprise the evaluation of: the content of the programme in the light of the latest research in the given discipline, thus ensuring that the programme is up to date; the changing needs of society; the students' workload, progression and completion; the effectiveness of the procedures for the assessment of students; the students' expectations, needs and satisfaction in relation to the programme; the learning environment, support services, and their fitness for purpose for the programme. Programmes are reviewed and revised regularly involving students and other stakeholders. The information collected is analysed and the programme is adapted to ensure that it is up-to-date.

Relevant documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

The annual internal self assessment report of the Department of Food Science and Nutrition of the University of Thessaly include:

- The Department's inventory data
- Quantitative and qualitative data concerning the annual operation of the department
- The research work of the faculty members
- The evaluation questionnaires completed by the faculty members, lecturers, and students of the department

All the outcomes of the self assessment are recorded and submitted to the QAU/MODIP of the institution. All the findings including strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats

are shared within the academic unit. The quality monitoring is directly linked to the analysis of the above as a platform to find solutions for maintaining the strengths and improving or erasing the weaknesses that sometimes derive from outside sources.

The growing needs of the labour market for specialized food scientists and nutritionists in matters related to the implementation of innovative food production technologies, the management, processing, and utilization of food byproducts, and the development of adequate methods for promoting innovative products for domestic, national and international market consumption, is a goal of the department for transferring the knowledge and adding all new developments.

II. Analysis

The quality assurance policy is directly related to policies of other universities and is formulated in collaboration with the MODIP, giving great importance to the uninterrupted improvement of the quality of the curriculum and of its research and administrative work. The department has established from the very first year of its operation the OMEA committee, and all faculty members currently participate, in areas that include, but are not limited to, the preparation of the annual and four-year evaluation reports of the department, the conduct of course evaluations by students, etc. The main purpose of the OMEA is to make recommendations regarding ways to improve the quality of the education provided to students, to evaluate the level of research work and the administration of the department.

The Department is committed to ensuring the quality of its educational, research, and administrative activities. The department is committed to ensuring the quality of its educational, research, and administrative activities. The department is dedicated to achieve high standards of operational quality, improve educational and research work, and to implement best practices in accordance with international academic development activities.

The connection of teaching with research, the training and scientific activities of the research staff is of primary importance on the impact of the acquired qualifications of graduates on the labour market.

III. Conclusions

The above principle 10 fully meets the criteria for fully compliant according to the instructions provided by HAHE.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

The panel has no recommendations for this principle.

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

The new undergraduate study programmes should regularly undergo evaluation by panels of external experts set by HAHE, aiming at accreditation. The results of the external evaluation and accreditation are used for the continuous improvement of the Institutions, academic units and study programmes. The term of validity of the accreditation is determined by HAHE.

HAHE is responsible for administrating the programme accreditation process which is realised as an external evaluation procedure and implemented by a panel of independent experts. HAHE grants accreditation of programmes, based on the Reports submitted by the panels, with a specific term of validity, following to which revision is required. The accreditation of the quality of the programmes acts as a means of verification of the compliance of the programme with the Standards, and as a catalyst for improvement, while opening new perspectives towards the international standing of the awarded degrees. Both academic units and institutions must consistently consider the conclusions and the recommendations submitted by the panels of experts for the continuous improvement of the programme.

Relevant documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

The Department of Food Science and Nutrition at the University of Thessaly, part of the School of Agricultural Sciences, was established in 2018 and began operations in 2019 in Karditsa. From 2005 to 2018, it functioned as the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics within the Karditsa Branch of the former Technical Educational Institute of Larisa (T.E.I. of Larisa), which became the University of Applied Sciences of Thessaly (T.E.I. of Thessaly) in 2013. The Department submitted its accreditation documentation in 2022, marking its first accreditation in its current form.

The submitted material included the two most recent internal evaluations by OMEA for the academic years 2019–20 and 2020–21. Both evaluations were conducted in accordance with HAHE guidelines.

II. Analysis

The reports indicate that the number of faculty members doubled from 5 in the 2019–20 academic year to 10 in the 2020–21 academic year. The reports also showed an increase in

student enrolment and overall student numbers, as well as strong faculty participation in committees at all levels.

Both reports address the internship program and internal student evaluations. Due to the limited timeframe covered, the reports note improvements in some areas, but these findings are not conclusive.

III. Conclusions

The department conducted internal evaluations for the years prior to submitting materials for the HAHE evaluation. The program fully complies with Principle 11.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

The panel has no recommendations regarding this principle.

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

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

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

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

Relevant documentation

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

Study Programme Compliance

Please comment on the compliance with the Principle. Specifically: Please describe the findings related to the Principle, analyse, and conclude your judgement. Findings, analysis of judgement and conclusions should be developed below in three distinct parts.

I. Findings

The Department of Food Science and Nutrition at the University of Thessaly, part of the School of Agricultural Sciences, was established in 2018 and began operations in 2019 in Karditsa. From 2005 to 2018, it operated as the Department of Nutrition and Dietetics within the Karditsa Branch of the former Technical Educational Institute of Larisa (T.E.I. of Larisa). The University Senate's decision to establish the new department includes comprehensive

documentation detailing the transition from a T.E.I. department, covering students, faculty, administrators, equipment, and related matters.

The institution maintains study regulations, a degree template, and a diploma supplement.

The institution employs qualified teaching staff and offers a structured curriculum that includes courses, ECTS credits, learning outcomes, and a data collection system.

II. Analysis

The transition process, established in 2018, was successful for the Department of Food Science and Nutrition, as evidenced seven years later. The study program, related regulations, faculty, administrative personnel, curriculum, and data collection systems are established and operational.

III. Conclusions

The department followed the process established by the institution with success. The program fully complies with Principle 12.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

Please provide your recommendations with regard to issues that need to be addressed, as appropriate.

The panel has no recommendations regarding this principle.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

Please state aspects of good practice identified, with regard to the new undergraduate study programme in operation.

- The program has established procedures for monitoring quality assurance and continuous improvement, which align with the strategic objectives of the Department and the University.
- The department's faculty and staff are enthusiastic and demonstrate strong research output in their areas of expertise.
- The department benefits from strong support from the local business community in the region, providing a competitive advantage.
- Faculty members of the department maintain robust relationships with local businesses and engage in research collaborations.
- The department receives strong support from the university's administration.
- A compulsory four-month internship is required for the degree.

Areas of Weakness

Please state weak areas identified, with regard to the new undergraduate study programme in operation.

- Establish academic student clubs where students can engage in activities related to the club's focus, such as a student club dedicated to food safety.
- Implement measures to increase student participation in course evaluations.
- Publish every course outline in both English and Greek.

II. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

Please make any specific recommendations for development.

- Invest in facilities, including an industrial pilot plant, to enhance the department's capabilities.
- Consider establishing an external advisory board with industry representatives to advise on curriculum development and support internship opportunities.
- Increase the number of tenure-tenure track faculty in the Department, particularly those with expertise in food-related areas.
- Increase technical support personnel for teaching laboratory-based courses.
- Develop department-specific key performance indicators (KPIs) to set measurable goals, track outcomes, and identify areas for improvement, thereby strengthening the overall quality and impact of the program.

III. Summary & Overall Assessment

The Principles where full compliance has been achieved are: 1, 2, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12.

The Principles where substantial compliance has been achieved are: 3, 4, 5, 7.

The Principles where partial compliance has been achieved are: None

The Principles where failure of compliance was identified are: None

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

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname **Signature**

1. Prof. Athanasios Alexandrou (Chair)
   California State University, Fresno, U.S.A.

2. Prof. John Floros
   New Mexico State University, U.S.A.

3. Prof. Demetrios Kazantzis
   Food and Beverage Consultants, U.S.A.

4. Prof. Amalia Tsiami
   University of West London, U.K.

5. Mr. Stavros Korovesis, Undergraduate Student
   Agricultural University of Athens, Greece