



ΕΛΛΗΝΙΚΗ ΔΗΜΟΚΡΑΤΙΑ
HELLENIC REPUBLIC



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for Higher Education

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**Accreditation Report
for the Undergraduate Study Programme
(Integrated Master) of:**

Architecture

Institution: Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Date: 10 April 2021

Report of the Panel appointed by the HAHE to undertake the review of the Undergraduate Study Programme (Integrated Master) of **Architecture** of the **Aristotle University of Thessaloniki** for the purposes of granting accreditation

Abbreviations

AUTH	Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
ECTS	European Credit Transfer System
EEAP	External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel
EDIP	Laboratory Teaching Staff
EER2014	External Evaluation Report of 2014
ETEP	Laboratory Technicians
HAHE	Hellenic Authority for Higher Education
HNARIC	Hellenic National Recognition and Information Centre
IQAS (ΕΣΔΠ)	Internal Quality Assurance System
ARCH/AUTH	Department of Architecture at Aristotle University of Thessaloniki
MODIP	Quality Assurance Unit (ΜΟΔΙΠ)
ΟΜΕΑ	Internal Evaluation Groups/School's Internal Evaluation Committee
QA	Quality Assurance

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PART A: BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE REVIEW

I. The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

The Panel responsible for the Accreditation Review of the Undergraduate Study Programme (Integrated Master) of **Architecture** of the **Aristotle University of Thessaloniki** comprised the following five (5) members, drawn from the HAHE Register, in accordance with Laws 4009/2011 & 4653/2020:

- 1. Professor Loukas Kalisperis, (Chair)**
Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania, USA
- 2. Assoc. Professor Marilena Kourniati**
École Nationale Supérieure d' Architecture Paris – Val de Seine, Paris, France
- 3. Ms. Evdoxia Papalioura, MPhil**
Member of the Technical Chamber of Greece, Thessaloniki, Greece
- 4. Professor Marios C. Phocas**
University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus
- 5. Professor Georgia Traganou**
Parsons School of Design, The New School, New York, USA

II. Review Procedure and Documentation

The **External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel (EEAP)** reviewed the material submitted by the Department of **Architecture (ARCH)** of the **Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH)** in advance of its *virtual visit* (via tele-conference) and *virtual* briefing. The Director and staff of HAHE briefed the members of the EEAP on its mission and standards, as well as the guidelines for the review process and the national framework of the higher education institution in Greece. The EEAP met, in private, to discuss the program review report for the Department of Architecture of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, allocate tasks and list the issues for the site *virtual visit*.

The visit was conducted via online conference meetings (*Zoom*) due to COVID-19 travel restrictions and took place on 5, 6 & 7 April 2021. The EEAP wrote the report in the following days (8-10 April 2021) through collaborative meetings, held via the Zoom platform. The EEAP would like to express its deep appreciation for the efforts that the Department's academic staff, administrative staff, students, alumni and HAHE took on in order for the *virtual visit* to be a productive and effective experience. Although the EEAP was able to collect enough information for an understanding of the program, the *virtual visit* was **not as effective and rewarding** as an in-person evaluation. It is advised that HAHE resumes in-situ visits as soon as the conditions permit.

EEAP met initially with the **Architecture** Chair and the Vice-Rector of Academic Affairs of the **Aristotle University of Thessaloniki**, on 5 April 2021, for an in-depth introductory meeting where initial presentations of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and the Architecture Department took place. The Department's Chair and the Vice-Rector of Academic Affairs gave an overview of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and the Department of Architecture, regarding its history, vision, mission, current status, strengths, and academic profile. Further presentations provided useful information about the Department of Architecture strengths and areas of concern. The afternoon meetings continued with an in-depth presentation by representatives of the Quality Assurance Unit (MODIP) and the Internal Evaluation Group (OMEA), followed by comprehensive discussion with all MODIP & OMEA members, during which the EEAP received additional information about the program, the various activities of the Department regarding the curriculum, academic and administrative/support staff, student body, and research activities. During this meeting the EEAP was given the opportunity to ask detailed questions, in order to better facilitate the Panel's understanding of the curriculum, internal evaluation review process, adequacy of resources and possible areas of strengths and weaknesses. The EEAP received further documentation and supporting material related to the presentations given by MODIP & OMEA that facilitated our discussions. EEAP reflected on the discussions and prepared for the next day's sessions of the '*virtual visit*', during which it met with teaching staff members and student representatives. The first day of the *virtual visit* was concluded with a brief meeting of the EEAP, in order to evaluate the accomplishments of the day and plan the activities and meetings of the following day.

The second day, 6 April 2021, started with teaching staff members and representatives from the student body meetings. During the meeting with the academic staff the EEAP was given the opportunity to ask detailed questions in order to better facilitate the Panel's understanding of the curriculum, internal evaluation review process, adequacy of resources and possible areas of

strengths weaknesses. Additionally, the students provided the members of the EEAP with valuable information about their study experience, curriculum, and campus facilities. They discussed their priority issues concerning student life, mobility, research, and career opportunities. The students were very hospitable, enthusiastic and helpful. They conducted themselves admirably and were excellent ambassadors of a good educational Institution.

The second day continued with a video tour of the facilities and a discussion followed, in order to address any EEAP members' questions. Following the brief virtual tour of the facilities, the *virtual visit* concluded with an extensive discussion between the EEAP and the Department's staff and academic/teaching staff in order to further elucidate some of the concerns and points that EEAP was interested in pursuing in their subsequent discussions.

The third day, 7 April 2021, started with a teleconference of EEAP with alumni of the Department of Architecture in order to assess their experience and identify how well their studies are serving them in their current work environment. The alumni with whom we spoke, many of whom work abroad and some in academic positions in other universities, spoke highly of the value of their experience noting that in addition to architectural design the program prepared them for other design-related career paths. The graduates of the Department of Architecture highly appreciated the close working relationship that they had with the academic staff and the pluralism that existed within the department. The third day of the *virtual visit* continued with a meeting of employers, social partners, and external stakeholders, representing very impressive professional offices and organizations, enterprises, national and local authorities. During the meetings the EEAP was able to hear their experiences either during their studies at the Department of Architecture and/or their relations with the Department, as well as aiming to address the readiness of the graduates for the market and identify areas of cooperation between the Department of Architecture and employers. All participants spoke very enthusiastically of the Department of Architecture and their affiliation with it. It was evident that the Department is held in a very high regard by its alumni and external stakeholders.

Concluding the third day meetings the EEAP met with the academic and administrative staff working on the Program Review Report, MODIP & OMEA, and the Vice-Rector, in which a quick summary of the visit was also provided. During the meeting the EEAP was able to further clarify several key points and engage in a very detailed discussion on the curriculum and facilities. EEAP received additional information about Department of Architecture, administrative, buildings and resources, library, external relations and the electronic systems for student satisfaction and student records. Additional impromptu discussions with the Chair of OMEA and the Department of Architecture Chair took place, in order to clarify certain points of the very details and comprehensive presentations and request additional information, which were promptly provided. The EEAP presented to the Vice-Rector their grave concerns about the dramatic reduction (approximately 75%) of the academic staff over the last 20 years and the need for immediate increase of the numbers of staff teaching and researching within the Department of Architecture.

Both the current students and the alumni spoke very highly about the **heroic** devotion of time and energy invested by their instructors, with them extending the teaching hours long after the official completion of the meeting period for each course, which safeguards the high level of the course quality. It is imperative that the central University administration understands the

different teaching requirements that are embedded in architectural education and the increased resources that are needed, in order to successfully complete an architectural education. The EEAP highly appreciates this devotion, but it notes that the very low numbers of teaching staff coupled with the foreseeable *burn-out* of the current members can be detrimental in the future development of the Department.

The EEAP met via tele-conference, for the remainder of the “virtual visit”, in order to complete the report and submit it to HAHE on Saturday, 10 April 2021.

In closing, the EEAP would like to express our sincere gratitude for the excellent support, hospitality and openness that we encountered during our *virtual visit*.

III. Study Programme Profile

The Department of Architecture (ARCH) of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (AUTH) was established in 1956. This is a 5-year integrated Master's undergraduate program, in which students are required to complete a total of 44 courses (10 of which are Required Design Studios) – 32 Required and 12 Electives - along with the completion of the Design Diploma Thesis (Διπλωματική) and a Research Project (Lecture-Διάλεξη). Most students also complete a Practical Training experience and some course outside of the Department's offerings. The program has an equivalency of 300 ECTS including the Practical Training. Students do not identify any concentration areas in which they select their courses and or complete their Design Diploma Thesis (Διπλωματική) in similar thematic areas. The Department has developed a curriculum, in which the first three years of study are structured with the final two years having more options through elective and optional studios and courses.

The Department is organized in 5 Divisions (Τομείς) that do not constitute vertical specializations but concentrate on specific scientific backgrounds offering students a more comprehensive and multifaceted design and scientific background which covers most of the spectrum of Architecture. The first three years of the program constitute the common compulsory general education for all the students, after which students select areas of specialization and complete a number of experimental design studio experiences in diverse thematic areas (since there are no specializations provided by the study program of the School). The final year is focused on the completion of a Research Project (Lecture-Διάλεξη) and the Design Diploma Project (Διπλωματική).

Course syllabi are available for all courses taught online in the web page of the Department. Students are given the opportunity to evaluate the courses they attend.

Graduates of the program obtain the title of Architectural Engineer and can become members of the Technical Chamber of Greece (TEE). Graduates can be employed in both the private and public sector and most of the graduates have been successfully placed in both sectors after their graduation, in addition to completing post-graduate studies, either in Greece or overseas. Throughout the academic year, seminars and lectures are held with professionals working in the field that provide additional information and exposure to different work environments. The Practical Training, although not required, provides graduates with an opportunity to explore job prospects, gain some work experience and make contacts. The Department supports diverse student educational experiences through the *Erasmus+* program, with a number of students participating in this program over the last few years. The academic staff of Department is also engaged in five (5) different and highly successful post-graduate programs, in addition and as an overload to their undergraduate program responsibilities.

There are 24 academic staff members that support the educational and research activities of the program and most have doctoral degrees from Institutions abroad or in Greece. Additionally, there are four (4) *special teaching staff members* (ΕΔΙΠ) as well as one ΕΕΠ member. Additionally, currently there are fourteen (14) *Temporary Term teaching staff* (ΠΔ 407/80) and five (5) temporary teaching positions funded by the ΕΣΠΑ program. An issue of grave concern is the dramatic reduction of academic staff over the last 10 years and the inability to replace the vast number of academic staff that have already retired in order to ensure

continuity of the program. Additionally, a point of concern is the disproportionately very small number of *special teaching staff members (ΕΔΙΠ)* members and the small number of *Technical Support staff (ΕΤΕΠ)*. The Department has a commendable number of publications and extensive research activities, both in projects and funds. The Department was evaluated in 2014 through an External Evaluation Committee and the recommendations of the report have been addressed or are in the process of been addressed.

The Department is considered a large academic entity (in terms of students), where there are 1458 undergraduate students, 240 post-graduate students, 100 doctoral candidates and 4 others in a post-doctorate engagement, with ratio of students to faculty of around 30. The student to teaching staff ratio of the Department is more than double than that of other Architecture Departments in Greece. Also, the number of students per required studio is 75 which is considered very high as the average ratio in many European countries is 15 students in studio course. The number of academic staff is critically low proportionally to the size of the program and the diverse activities of the academic staff.

Both the current students and the alumni spoke very highly about the **heroic** devotion of time and energy invested by their instructors, with them extending the teaching hours long after the official completion of the meeting period for each course, which safeguards the high level of the course quality. It is imperative that the central University administration understands the different teaching requirements that are embedded in architectural education and the increased resources that are needed, in order to successfully complete an architectural education. The EEAP highly appreciates this devotion, but it notes that the **low** number of teaching staff can be detrimental in the further continuation and development of the Department.

PART B: COMPLIANCE WITH THE PRINCIPLES

Principle 1: Academic Unit Policy for Quality Assurance

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

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

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

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

The program is primarily an architecture design-based curriculum geared towards the professional preparation of the future architect with references to the theory and history, new technologies and environmental aspects of the profession and the multidisciplinary nature of architectural education and research. The Department of Architecture is fully compliant to the

European and the National Qualifications Framework for Higher Education in terms of learning outcomes and qualifications. It is commendable that the Department prioritizes the tracking of its alumni, whose career evolution constitutes one of the most important quality indicators.

The Department of Architecture has taken important commendable initiatives in terms of quality and effectiveness of the teaching / learning process. Notable commendable examples are the design studios, experimental workshops, and practical training.

The academic staff is highly qualified, enthusiastic, and motivated. It appears also that there is a very good and productive collaboration and teamwork that ensures, despite the very low teaching staff / student ratio, a very good result in terms of quality of the Department's alumni. The EEAP finds that there is a highly diverse, energetic, and innovative faculty among whom a strong sense of community is existing. The faculty is respected by students and mentioned as a primary reason by students for enrolment in the programs of the Department. It is very sad that the Department of Architecture was not able, presumably because of the financial crisis, to recruit additional high-level staff, as had been recommended in the *External Evaluation Report of 2014 (EER2014)*, which identified one of their concerns as *“retiring faculty is not being replaced, resulting in a reduction of teaching personnel from **about 77 to 43, during the period of 2007- 2013**. This resulted into a drastic reduction of the elective courses offered and also in the number of the available studio instructors. All this had a major effect on the overall curriculum of the Department”*. **Unfortunately, the situation has been exacerbated by the further reduction of academic staff to 24!**

Research output is adequate, especially considering the particular conditions of the Department of Architecture (small number of staff, nature of output often suitable for exhibitions/built projects rather than scientific publications). Most EER2014 recommendations on that matter have been implemented. The Department does have its own *Research Committee* as well as relying on the services of the Research Committee of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki (EAKE).

The Department of Architecture has given more importance to linking teaching to practical applications rather than research as such. This has given commendable results in terms of visibility, collaborative projects, alumni placement and important service to the community, society, and profession. The multi-discipline and adaptability injected to the Department of Architecture students throughout their studies has led to excellent results in the placement of its alumni in the labour market, in Greece and abroad. In particular, following the external evaluation of the program, the revisions of the program of studies that were made, are the reduction of the number of courses, mainly through consolidation of individual lecture and laboratory-based courses, the introduction of courses addressing issues of new media and technologies and the redefinition of the students' workload in each course. The interdependence of the 9th semester courses, especially of the research project (*Lecture-Διάλεξη*) with the final Design Diploma Thesis (*Διπλωματική*) is expected to act positively on the achievement of a research by design process development and the successful completion of the final design thesis by the end of the 10th semester.

The quality of the support services is excellent despite the difficulties and limitations inherent to the Department size and location. This was made apparent to the EEAP also from the excellent support throughout the accreditation process.

The Department claims a continuous quality monitoring through the frequent update of the Department of Architecture KPIs. However, there are no yearly or 4-year Evaluation Reports at the external level.

Concluding, the Department's QA policy is fully compliant with the HAHE policy and guidelines and also the EU QA standards on Higher Education. Its curriculum has many commendable and innovative features. However, the Department of Architecture still has to implement fully some important recommendations from the EER2014. In part this is due to factors outside the Department of Architecture (i.e., budgetary constraints due to the economic crisis etc.).

The internationalization of the program through participation in *Erasmus+*, European networks of education and research, organization of international conferences and workshops in Thessaloniki, set-up of common courses with other Universities, as well as the students' and graduates' employment and activities abroad are noted. Equally important must be the acknowledgment by the quality assurance body of the faculty research activities, sabbatical leaves and participation in international conferences. Nevertheless, due to economic constraints, presently there is **very limited** financial support by the University or the government for the faculty's research activities. There is also no mechanism for renewal and development of the faculty body through the hiring of new colleagues, external collaborators, or ΕΔΙΠ and ΕΤΕΜ staff. It is not clear if, in this framework, the quality assurance body has succeeded in extending and adapting the evaluation criteria for promotion of the faculty members to include accomplishments beyond research and also measures of architectural recognition.

Panel Judgement

Principle 1: Academic Unit Policy for Quality Assurance	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

R1.1 External review of the Department of Architecture identity / branding, vision and goals, through an independent advisory board, ad-hoc expert panels and/or a dedicated international workshop. Annual internal reviews need to be further institutionalized by the Department, as well as external evaluations, organized by the Department itself every 4 years. This will help to constantly revise and improve the profile and mission of the

Department, as well as to set up long-term development aims and policies at multiple levels of operation.

- R1.2** The updating of the curriculum and the program should be perceived as a continuous and dynamic internal evaluation process that involves a number of constituents including faculty, students, alumni, and external partners. This committee should include, in an advisory capacity all stakeholders, and should have a tight time schedule of meetings and consultations with the aim of a comprehensive proposal to be discussed and approved by the faculty. The central administration should facilitate such endeavours.

Principle 2: Design and Approval of Programmes

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

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

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

The Department of Architecture of the School of Engineering of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki has been operating since 1956. An external evaluation and a revision of the program of studies took place in 2014. The program of studies was further updated in 2019, following an evaluation process of its implementation since 2014. The update of the program aimed at further improving the sequence and number of courses as a result of a significant decrease of the number of faculty that took place, predominantly since 2010. It also includes an integrated Master's degree within the 5 years Diploma. The program is approved at European Union level as to the 11 points of reference of the EU directive 2005/36/EC article 46.

The program's specific contents, objectives and aims comply with the academic and scientific guidelines set by the University. The program is oriented towards extroversion, innovation, and a pluralistic approach to architectural design, while the mission of the Department is stated to provide a high-level architectural education in meeting the increased demands of today's globalized, competitive profession, nationally as well as internationally. In this frame, the architectural education covers all areas of architectural design at various scales, extending from the urban and spatial planning to the building and industrial design, up to the environmental

and construction design. Thus, a wide range of related fields of arts, technology and sciences is covered within that support the provision of theoretical background, cultivation of research and their integration within the design process at different scales and levels of complexity. In achieving this, the specific structure of the program of studies is based on modules and sequences of courses in "vertical" evolution from semester to semester and in continuous "diagonal" sectional correlations. The core of the program of studies consists of the major courses of architectural design offered in each semester. These are based on a specific thematic, complexity and integration of individual related design-based and theoretical courses. In addition, related minor architectural design courses are offered in each preceding semester that lay emphasis on the provision of specific knowledge and integration skills in design tasks, experimentation, and specialization. The last two semesters primarily refer to the research and design diploma. In principle, most courses are compulsory in the first three years, whereas the students may select their courses and area of possible concentration for the development of their research project and design diploma thesis in the last two years. Even within this highly structured educational progression in the curriculum, a high degree of flexibility is offered throughout the studies with regard to the individual courses' selection and area of possible concentration. At the same time, the last stage of studies acts as integral component of the 5 years program of study, and is clearly formulated with regard to the integrated Master's component.

The quality assurance body and the faculty as a whole support the existing identity of the program as formulated above. The EEAP believes that this identity is presently adequately and convincingly reflected in the structure of the program of studies. Presently, the sequence of the main courses in architectural design are clearly defined with regard to the contents, levels of advancement and pedagogical objectives and the individual courses in each semester act synergistically to the practice of design. In addition, the optional practical internship counts within the required 300 ECTS to complete the program of studies.

The program reflects the interests and specializations of the faculty and is comparable with programs internationally. The majority of the faculty has a strong design profile and an area of specialization; an effective synergy between research, creative practice and teaching is demonstrated. In all cases, the faculty should be commended for addressing the high number of the student body at a time of multiple crises and reduction of positions by preserving through personal efforts a program organization that still corresponds to a much higher number of faculty members. In ameliorating the high ratio of almost 1:30 (faculty members to students) and the quality of education, a thoughtful restructuring of the divisions of the Department through horizontal correlations should be made that address present and future changes and challenges of the discipline. Furthermore, some divisions of the Department can be consolidated (e.g., the traditional divisions of architectural and urban design and urban and spatial planning and regional development) and all reformulated, in order to account for the broader contemporary context of the discipline, with reference to theory, communication media, social and environmental sustainability, digital computation and fabrication, technology design, inter- and cross-disciplinary design-based research. An expansion of faculty through the announcement of new positions (additionally to the four prospective allocated ones) in the next few years is required that should address such cross-disciplinary areas of design-based research and teaching, rather than the traditional ones. This will also provide the needed financial and

otherwise resources, in order to maintain the future development and sustainability of the program and can be a mechanism to forge the emerging identity of the Department.

The labs in the Department are adequately implemented and in support of the acquisition and implementation of research projects, the achievement of diversity within the discipline and potential for interdisciplinary research activities. The faculty is credited for the continuous expansion of its labs' infrastructure, especially the recent acquisition of automated fabrication equipment and personnel. In addition, the construction/model making lab should be reactivated and supported by additional personnel for its operation. The hands-on experience in model making should be equally acknowledged in architectural education to the automated fabrication of models and prototypes.

The Department delivers on the stated intention of creating an extroverted program and opening the students' horizons to the international circles in academia and practice. The course syllabi support this direction through both project and bibliography. The alumni with whom we spoke, many of whom work abroad and have significant achievements in practice since graduation, spoke highly of the value of their experience noting that the program prepared them to be interdisciplinary, resilient, and flexible in acquiring new knowledge and design skills in traditional and new environments along with the profession evolution.

There are procedures and regulations for the revisions of the program, and the EEAP was made aware that the program has been internally monitored and assessed periodically. External consultations and collaborative activities with the private and civil sector are realized in systematic way. The student representatives are involved and included in the departmental meetings and contribute to curriculum revisions. Students have contributed by submitting course and faculty evaluations. We would encourage the use of virtual platforms/social media to enhance student participation and engagement.

The student guide is complete and appropriate. The Department web site is updated and well-structured with regard to the courses' syllabi, the academic personnel information, research and networking activities of the Department. An inclusion of courses design results on the Department web site would definitely further enhance the visibility and quality of the work accomplished at the Department throughout all stages of the program of study. This will allow the students and other stakeholders to access efficiently both, the academic and non-academic resources of the Program and the University.

Panel Judgement

Principle 2: Design and Approval of Programmes	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel agrees that this Programme leads to a Level 7 Qualification according to the National & European Qualifications Network (Integrated Master)	YES	NO*
	X	

Panel Recommendations

- R2.1** The updating of the curriculum should be perceived as a continuous and dynamic process that involves a number of entities including faculty, students, and external participants. The interdepartmental internal evaluation committee (OM.E.A.) should include, in an advisory capacity all stakeholders, and should have a regular time schedule of meetings and consultations with the aim of continuous related improvements to be discussed and approved by the faculty. The central administration should facilitate such endeavours.
- R2.2** An advanced component and the possibility of concentration of the students' education in the final two years should be further provided. The interdependence of the 9th semester courses, especially of the research project with the final design diploma thesis is expected to act positively on the achievement of a research by design process development and the completion of the final design thesis by the end of the 10th semester.
- R2.3** Some divisions of the Department can be consolidated (e.g., the traditional divisions of architectural and urban design and urban and spatial planning and regional development) and all reformulated, in order to account for the broader contemporary context of the discipline, with reference to theory, communication media, social and environmental sustainability, digital computation and fabrication, technology design, inter- and cross-disciplinary design-based research. The new faculty hires should be guided by the restructuring of the divisions. An expansion of faculty through the announcement of new positions (additionally to the four prospective allocated ones) in the next few years is required that should address such cross-disciplinary areas of design-based research and teaching, rather than the traditional ones. This will also provide the needed financial and otherwise resources, in order to maintain the future development and sustainability of the program and can be a mechanism to forge the emerging identity of the Department.

- R2.4** The construction/model making lab should be reactivated and supported by additional personnel for its operation. The hands-on experience in model making should be equally acknowledged in architectural education to the automated fabrication of models and prototypes.
- R2.5** Student work from design studios inclusion on the Department web site would definitely further enhance the visibility and quality of the work accomplished at the Department throughout all stages of the program of study. This will allow the students and other stakeholders to access efficiently both, the academic and non-academic resources of the Program and the University.

Principle 3: Student- centred Learning, Teaching and Assessment

INSTITUTIONS SHOULD ENSURE THAT THE 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.

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

The student-centred learning and teaching process

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

In addition :

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

Study Programme Compliance

The program curriculum of the Department of Architecture is articulated in 10 semesters, integrating a Master's Degree within a 5-year Diploma (300 ECTS). The program consists of lecture courses and different types of design studios (extended, introductory, specialized, experimental and intensive).

Since the last external evaluation (2014), a new curriculum has been implemented, to integrate new theoretical and practical issues, in the era of globalization, new technologies and environmental requirements, and in order to cope with the constraints resulting from a substantial decrease of the teaching staff since 2007. This program has been updated following

an internal evaluation in 2019. The current program has a comprehensive structure, crossing the progressiveness of the various disciplines and design practices from one semester to another (vertical structure) with the themes of the departments (diagonal structure). Interdisciplinary is thus emphasized within the Expanded Design Workshops (Studios) (1 through 8 semester) although theoretical courses ensure the autonomy of the various disciplines (history and theory, construction and technology, arts and techniques). The courses of the first three years make up the core curriculum, after which students can choose between Required Electives or Electives courses. The latter are, however, reduced in time due to the decrease in teaching staff. Experimentation is promoted in semesters 8 and 9 and personal research takes place through the Research Project (*Lecture-Διάλεξη*) and the Design Diploma Thesis (*Διπλωματική*) (semester 9 and 10), for which the topics are freely chosen by the student. Students select a professor or a team of professors as supervisor(s) and decide together the frequency of follow-up meetings. The Design Diploma Thesis (*Διπλωματική*) is presented publicly to a three-member jury, plus the supervisor, who assign the grade. The Design Diploma Thesis (*Διπλωματική*) defence sessions, which take place three (3) times per year, are highlighted events of exchange for the whole community of students and teachers. The practical training is not compulsory, but it is motivated by public funding (ΕΣΠΑ) and is integrated to the curriculum (6 ETCS).

There is one academic advisor per semester, to provide assistance with the progress issues of students, through the program. For problems of different nature, students can contact the Student Care Committee of Aristotle University.

A student survey system exists, and students can evaluate the quality of courses through questionnaires online. The participation, in the last two years, is approaching 20%, which is quite important compared to other faculties in Greece.

By crossing the theories and practices of the project with the contribution of various disciplines, the program covers all ranges from the micro-scale of an object to the macro-scale of a territory and introduces the students to different professional fields. It is thus a complex program that prepares students for various professional practices while stimulating their motivation, self-reflection and engagement in the learning process.

The Department promotes international collaborations. A large number of students go abroad in the context of *Erasmus+* Exchange European Program (around 45 per year) or for a practical training, and a significant number of graduates go abroad either for postgraduate studies or to work in well-known architecture offices.

Students are also motivated to pursue their personal passions, as many extra-curricular activities are available within the Department of Architecture (theatre, photography etc.).

Despite the large number of students entering the program (e.g., 159 in 2020, most years around 185, 1065 active students n+2) and the significant reduction of the teaching force, the professor-student relationships are still very interpersonal. Students and former graduates emphasized the great investment of their professors and the close exchange with them, which continues quite frequently even after the end of their studies, expressing a sense of belonging to a community.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- R3.1** The EEAP recommends the urgent increase in teaching staff which will allow, among other things, an increase in elective courses.
- R3.2** The teaching personnel could favour the new option, provided within the existing policy, to request from the students to fill the survey during the course, while in class, to boost participation.
- R3.3** The students' work is digitised but for copyright reasons is not yet online. This obstacle must be overcome in order to highlight the Department's production and demonstrate the plurality and diversity of design research and practice.

Principle 4: Student Admission, Progression, Recognition and Certification

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

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

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

The students' progressions is facilitated, monitored and reflected through electronic tools such as *Register.auth.gr*; *MyAuth*; *Sis.auth.gr* as well as the support of the Administration office (Γραμματεία) staff. Faculty members and administration staff also provide information about the structure of the program as informal Advisors according to students' needs.

A Student Handbook is available on the website as well as a Research and Thesis handbook. Both handbooks are well structured, legible and informative. Student Handbook provides clear description of the progression of the program per semester and states the number of required credits to progress through the program (30 ECTS required per semester). Roughly the first 6 semesters consist of Required or Required Elective (Umbrella) courses, with possibilities of Electives established in Semesters 7th, 8th and 9th. The last year (semester 9th and 10th) is typically devoted to the development of a two-partite capstone work (research and project-based thesis). The Department web site is updated and well-structured with regard to the courses' syllabi, the academic personnel information, research and networking activities of the Department. An inclusion of courses design results on the Department web site would definitely further enhance the visibility and quality of the work accomplished at the Department throughout all stages of the program of study. This will allow the students and other stakeholders to access efficiently both, the academic and non-academic resources of the Program and the University.

Student mobility is encouraged and facilitated primarily through the *Erasmus+* program. The Architecture school had most of the *Erasmus+* applications among the University (around 45 students per year, over 6%). ECTS are applied after students' successful attendance of courses

abroad, as well as for classes attended by international students who come to the Department via *Erasmus+*.

There is an optional practical training for 6 ECTS implemented in 2019. Practical training taking place in Greece is funded by ΕΣΠΑ, and there is an additional option of practical training abroad supported by *Erasmus+*. Students can do a 3-month long practical training after their 8th semester of study. Students are selected based on clearly established criteria. There is also a handbook that describes the scope and criteria of the program.

The Department has developed an extremely effective network in the city of Thessaloniki to support the practical training component. This network also absorbs a large number of the school's graduates for work placement upon graduation. Practical training has the potential to become a valuable component of the program in developing skills that will relate with the students' future jobs and thesis work.

Panel Judgement

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

Panel Recommendations

- R4.1.** The EEAP recommends that Orientation meetings prior to registration for new classes for each cohort would help with the students' understanding of the overall scope of the curriculum and options.
- R4.2.** Practical training has been in place in the curriculum only since 2019, with several of the current students having done work equivalent to practical training in earlier years. The EEAP recommends that earlier work performed prior to 2019 could be recognized retrospectively as practical training credit upon submission of necessary documentation. Independent Study credit, a category that might be implemented in the curriculum, could facilitate such credit recognition.
- R4.3.** In agreement with the External Evaluation Report of 2014 the EEAP recommends that policies are set in place for students to avail themselves of various work study opportunities on campus.

Principle 5: Teaching Staff

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

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

The Department uses a variety of methods for recruiting academic staff: **ΑΠΕΛΛΑ (ΔΕΠ), ΕΣΠΑ (postdocs), adjunct positions (ΙΔΟΧ - former ΠΔ407/80), doctorate students, ΕΔΙΠ, ΕΕΠ**. The methods, criteria and processes of recruiting and hiring are transparent and as appropriate to the above organizations and their principles. The decreased number of new positions due to the financial crisis has resulted to an unacceptably small number of faculty in the school and extremely slow pace of filling out the positions that were vacated due to faculty's retirements in the last ten years. Teaching staff is promoted following processes established by the Greek law. There is no evidence of annual self-assessment by the faculty. There are no particular policies or strategic plan in place to attract highly qualified academic staff, but there is always a robust number of highly qualified applicants in the searches.

The faculty's areas of research and subsequently new positions are based on the five Divisions of the Department. Some of these Divisions are stronger than others, with theory/history and technology being currently the weakest. Furthermore, some Divisions of the Department can be consolidated (e.g., the traditional divisions of architectural and urban design and urban and spatial planning and regional development) and all reformulated, in order to account for the broader contemporary context of the discipline, with reference to theory, communication media, social and environmental sustainability, digital computation and fabrication, technology design, inter- and cross-disciplinary design-based research.

Despite the budgetary cuts and thus the lack of funds to secure ongoing supported scholarly activity of faculty, individual efforts for diverse scholarly engagement and research are evident

in the faculty accomplishments (architectural work, publications, conference participation, etc). It is notable however that the activity is relatively local and regional (mostly within Greece, and southern Europe), and with limited research output, for instance only one monograph produced since 2015 published by University Press which gives small visibility to the work and limited number of peer-review publications. Innovation in teaching is evident in the department primarily through the new curriculum established in 2014, updated in 2019 and use of new fabrication technologies (laser cutter, 3D printing, CNC router, vacuum former, etc.).

There is a student survey system in place and students can evaluate the quality of courses through questionnaires online. The participation, in the last two years, is approaching 20%, which is quite important compared to other faculties in Greece.

The EEAP would like to state that the evaluation of the Teaching Staff and their contribution to the Department is of the highest calibre. The Panel Judgment of *Substantially Complaint* reflects our conclusion with respect to the very **low number** of teaching staff that has not been restored to the needs of the Department and in equivalence of other Departments of Architecture in Greece.

Panel Judgement

Principle 5: Teaching Staff	
Fully compliant	
Substantially compliant	X
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

R5.1 The teaching workload of the teaching staff is currently imbalanced, difficult to calculate and distinguish between undergraduate and post-graduate teaching rationale, and hardly allows for engagement in research activities. The EEAP recommends a clearer teaching load and course release policy, and more structured development opportunities for the teaching staff, including sabbaticals and mobility.

R5.2 The EEAP recommends regular and systematic faculty evaluations prior to promotion (such as probationary reviews, and self-evaluations) as a way to streamline faculty members' understanding of what is needed for their successful promotion. Service in addition to research and teaching should be included as criteria for evaluation and promotion. A system of mentorship and support of junior faculty by senior faculty members as advised by the *External Evaluation Committee of 2014* should be implemented.

- R5.3** The five Divisions of the program were not convincing in their alignment with the current operation of architecture schools, and the EEAP considers them a remainder of the school's historical legacy. The EEAP sees the need to rationalize and potentially reduce the number of Divisions to avoid redundancies.
- R5.4** A clear strategic plan of hiring in the next five years to fill the gaps is necessary. The new positions should be defined per subject area of focus appropriate for contemporary architectural discourse (e.g., energy efficiency, sustainability, digital design, computer driven manufacturing, design and social justice, etc.). The EEAP advises the avoidance of inbreeding in the new hires to nurture a larger degree of diversity within the school.
- R5.5** Faculty are paying heroic effort to cover the current needs of the Department and have little time to establish the goals of a future vision. The EEAP suggests that an Advisory Board could help the program renew its structure and establish with higher clarity its future goals as distinct from the present conditions.
- R5.6** There is no mechanism for renewal and development of the faculty body through the hiring of new colleagues, external collaborators, or ΕΔΙΠ and ΕΤΕΜ staff. It is not clear if, in this framework, the quality assurance body has succeeded in extending and adapting the evaluation criteria for promotion of the faculty members to include accomplishments beyond research and also measures of architectural recognition.

Principle 6: Learning Resources and Student Support

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

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

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

The infrastructure of the Department is exemplary. Despite the devastating decrease of the teaching force and the financial limitations linked to the economic crisis, the Department have managed to constantly improve the quality of the environment and facilities.

There are large classrooms, one amphitheatre, several large-capacity studios for Design, student services and facilities and IT infrastructure. Spaces are preserved for the final year students to work on their Diploma project on site.

Through the use of 3D-modelling software and computer-controlled fabrication machines, the Digital Design and Manufacturing Lab allow the students to produce physical artefacts directly from digital models, to test their accuracy, and to evaluate their proposed structure prior to its construction.

The library with a staff of 4 people has a rich collection covering the various thematic areas related to architecture. The students of the Department can also use all the services and facilities of the Central Library of the Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, the University Gymnasium, and the camps of the Aristotle University.

The Department has specialised staff to support the computer systems, networks and computerisation of the Secretariat. Students are informed through the Department's website and the detailed Studies' Guide and the monitoring of students' studies, from enrolment to

graduation, is done electronically through the Student Record System. The textbooks for each course are free of charge and available for distribution through the system *Evdoxos* (“Εὐδοξος”).

The Department maintains a database of alumni data as part of its active administrative process and is in the process of developing the web site and database to enable communication between the graduates and facilitate the planning of events and meetings.

The Department, being considered well served, is obliged to hand over space to other departments on an ad hoc but regular basis. However, the various and collective practices of the architectural curriculum require a lot of space for experimentation and design research but also to allow student’s work on site. In any case, professors and administrative staff strive to provide students with all necessary human resources and physical space conditions, to successfully complete their studies. The Department should also reconsider the current distribution of office and lab space within existing facilities in order to better accommodate current members of the staff and students.

Panel Judgement

Principle 6: Learning Resources and Student Support	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- R6.1.** In line with the updated curriculum program, the EEAP advises that the Design studios and Workshops of each semester (8 distinct student workspaces) should occupy a space and secure storage area on a permanent basis to allow students to work in situ.
- R6.2.** Classrooms and amphitheatre need to be equipped with permanent (suspended) projection systems and contemporary teaching equipment.
- R6.3.** Infrastructure upgrades such as thermal insulation, air-conditioning and soundproofing are being deemed essential due to the hot climate and facility’s current condition, lacking the aforementioned.

Principle 7: Information Management

INSTITUTIONS 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.

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

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

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

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

The information system for managing and monitoring the data concerning the program of studies, related students' activities and teaching - research procedures, takes place at three different layers: The Ministry of Education, the University (AUTH) and the Department of Architecture. Specifically, through the implementation of respective information technology services provided by the University (e.g., sis.auth.gr, register.auth.gr, myAuth, sisassist.auth.gr, information system of quality assurance body-MODIP, students' practice experience etc.), a very effective information system of data collection and evaluation has been established and developed, thus contributing to the overall regular operation of the department. In addition, elearning.auth.gr platform hosts all electronic lessons and courses of the program, very successfully.

The data refer to the academic department, administration, teaching personnel, students and all teaching, research & functional procedures. Further data have been collected by the financial services and the library. A certain amount of all data mentioned above are presented on the official website of the school, including related announcements, the repository of courses, recent events & actions and the course instructors' work. The information obtained from the satisfaction surveys by the students and the graduates is not obvious.

The department analyses & evaluates all data collected and presents the results in quantifiable measures in terms of the studies' program, performance indicators, duration of studies, such as completion & dropout, as well as comparative conclusions of indicators with previous academic years. The data contribute for the preparation of internal or external evaluation reports and relative improvement proposals. The evaluation criteria of the faculty members do not include qualitative information.

Panel Judgement

Principle 7: Information Management	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- R7.1** The EEAP believes that the department has made noticeable efforts, in order to achieve students' participation in the evaluation of the teaching personnel. Additionally, the EEAP feels that there should be further incentives and measures that would apply to all students in the Department, in order to collect a strong and representative sample of feedback.
- R7.2** The Department should formalize individual efforts by faculty members to organize alumni via platforms of social media. A representative databank regarding various career paths followed by the graduates is extremely useful for prospective and current students, other graduates, stakeholders and the community, in general. In this context, the creation of an alumni body has already been established unofficially by the graduates of the program.
- R7.3** The EEAP would recommend that the evaluation criteria of the faculty members should be extended to include more qualitative information, such as artistic and architectural recognition oeuvre.

Principle 8: Public Information

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

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

The basic communication channel between the department and students is the official website of the institution. The review was conducted via tele-conferencing and as a result the EEAP did not see any evidence of other type of published material, such as periodicals or leaflets. Yet within the facilities of the department, we reached digitally a great variety of posters, concerning periodical lectures of invited architects. The website is very well-structured, and the information is clearly conveyed in a smart and effective way. Moreover, the graphics are elegant and up to date. The chronological sequence of news and announcements provides a facile and accurate understanding of all events and actions of the department. In addition, as far as the information for the program and the CVs of the school is concerned, its presentation is adequate and functional. There are no issues regarding missing recent information and the English version of the website is equally well organized.

Panel Judgement

Principle 8: Public Information	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- R8.1** Given the excellent presentation format of students' research work and theses, that was prepared for our review on the topic, the EEAP would recommend that the department enhances its electronic presence through a stronger presentation of all mentioned above.

R8.2 Additionally, the EEAP noticed the emerging presence of the department on social media, concerning communication groups of old graduates that should be strengthen officially.

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

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

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

The above comprise the evaluation of:

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

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. Revised programme specifications are published.

Study Programme Compliance

The Department has in place a process for periodic evaluation of the curriculum through support by the University mechanisms for Quality Assurance, the interdepartmental internal evaluation committee (OM.E.A.), the program of studies committee and the General Assembly meetings. There is a periodic evaluation process of faculty and course content by the students and an evaluation of the support services and learning environment by the faculty. Student representatives are involved and included in the departmental meetings and curriculum revisions.

The statistical data are collected through a series of questionnaires developed by the Quality Assurance Unit (QAU) of the University. The results of these questionnaires are summarized and discussed with the faculty and they are submitted to the QAU. The results for each course evaluated are shared with the faculty member(s) who taught the course and appropriate actions are initiated to address any issues raised as part of the evaluation.

Presently related monitoring and evaluation of the program of studies refer primarily to the current situation and needs of the Department in improving the ratio of faculty members to students and the duration of studies according to international standards for the schools of Architecture, strengthening of the research activities by the faculty through related synergistic actions with teaching and international mobility that is actually not realized due to the decreased number and therefore, heavy teaching load of the faculty members, and enrichment of the program with visiting faculty. Additionally, latest research trends and changing needs of the society should be included as driving components for the future development of the Department.

The Department also engages in continued communication with graduates. Initial steps have been made to develop an alumni database and formal, through social media, connections to the Department's graduates. This would allow for close relationships with the units they are working and provides an opportunity for the Department to engage with their employers and establish collaborative activities to address professional aspects, community needs, or common projects.

Panel Judgement

Principle 9: On-going Monitoring and Periodic Internal Review of Programmes	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- R9.1** The Department should engage in a formal and consistent evaluation process of the program of studies and activities. In short term the ratio of faculty members to students and the duration of studies need to be improved according to international standards for the schools of Architecture, the research activities by the faculty need to be strengthened through related synergistic actions with teaching and international mobility, and the program needs to be enriched with visiting faculty. Additionally, latest research trends and changing needs of the society should be included as driving components for the future development of the Department.
- R9.2** The Department should consider, as part of their programmatic evaluation, the trends of emerging cross-disciplinary research and practice in architecture in strategically addressing future faculty hires. The EEAP suggests that the Department restructures its divisions, identifies the emerging areas in the field and attempts to address them with the new hires. The EEAP is concerned that the Department's personnel are overextended in teaching and multiple administrative duties.

Principle 10: Regular External Evaluation of Undergraduate Programmes

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

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

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

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

Study Programme Compliance

The Department was evaluated in February 2014 by an international external evaluation committee. At that time, the Department was in the process of completing the revised program of studies, which was implemented in the following academic year. As the Department states, part of the external evaluation of 2014, was taken into account in the final formulation of the revised program of studies, but also in the update that followed in 2019. The revisions made referred to a complete restructuring of the curriculum based on a drastic reduction of courses, and the redefinition of architectural design courses in each semester to directly relate with individual thematises and scales, design-based and theoretical research from the subject areas defined within the divisions of the Department. This mode of operation succeeds in providing inter- and cross-disciplinary design environments, as already commented upon in the external evaluation, *"...This mode is further promoted by the proposed curriculum itself as groups of courses are designed to support each other and especially the theoretical courses to interact with and feed knowledge into the studios. This group approach is also the way in which the curriculum will be revised in the future."*

Along these lines, the EEAP recommends further consolidation and restructuring of the divisions of the Department, in order to address contemporary issues of the society and the profession, enhance its emerging identity and maintain the future development and sustainability of the program given the drastic reduction of the number of faculty members in the last decade. The divisions of the Department should account for the broader contemporary context of the discipline, with reference to theory, communication media, social and environmental sustainability, digital computation and fabrication, technology design, inter- and cross-disciplinary design-based research. The required expansion of faculty through the announcement of new positions (additionally to the four prospective allocated ones) in the next

few years should address such cross-disciplinary areas of design-based research and teaching, rather than the traditional ones.

The EEAP shares the comment made in the external evaluation with regard to the successful implementation of the post-graduate programs and the *“significant level of publicity and recognition”* achieved. At the same time, effective synergies are evident, not necessarily only between the post- and undergraduate program of studies, but already at the undergraduate program of studies between research, architectural design and theory courses. The concern expressed by the external evaluation, *“At the same time, it is hesitant to recommend establishment of more than the current five post-graduate programs, as too many may over-burden the resources of the Department, especially given the recent reductions in teaching personnel.”* applies even more critically today with regard to the existing five post-graduate programs given the extremely high teaching load of the faculty members and ratio of almost 1:30 of faculty members to undergraduate students, despite the fact that, the faculty is *“highly diverse, energetic, and innovative with a strong sense of community,”* as also stated by the external evaluation.

The EEAP is concerned with the currently, extremely low number of faculty, high teaching load of the faculty members and ratio of faculty members to students. The negative implications of a heavy teaching load in conducting research by the faculty are clearly evident and become increasingly critical for the future development and sustainability of the program. With regard to the stated goal of the Department of production of high-quality research activity, the recommendations made in the external evaluation for *“a more stable environment of the research organization in terms of institutionalization, staff and resources for its integration”*, and the need for pursuing *“the dissemination of the findings of research through peer-reviewed publications”*, also apply today.

The EEAP is also concerned with the efficiency of the teaching spaces and the lack of state financial means.

There have been no other evaluation efforts outside of the single review sponsored by HAHE. However, the Department implements the procedures set forth by the University Quality Assurance Unit, collects and analyses the required data periodically, and provides their results to the QAU.

All faculty and staff recognize the importance of the external evaluation and value the past and future recommendations. They all believe this helps the Department achieve its goals and purpose, help them improve, and engage in meaningful discussions about the future of the program and the changing educational demands placed by a diverse set of social and professional issues. Unfortunately, the Department does not have the financial means to implement its own external evaluation process. A possible solution might be the establishment of an advisory professional board whose members volunteer their services for the benefit of the Department.

The EEAP had the opportunity to interact not only with almost all faculty and staff members, but also with current students of the Department, as well as graduates. All showed a great level of enthusiasm and professionalism as well as commitment in supporting and aiding the Panel in any manner and request made. The administration, faculty and staff of the Department were

very eager and accommodating to the needs and requests of the Panel, which was made to feel very welcomed. The slightly negative current comments presented in this Principle could be ameliorated by implementing the suggested recommendations by both external reviews.

Panel Judgement

Principle 10: Regular External Evaluation of Undergraduate Programmes	
Fully compliant	X
Substantially compliant	
Partially compliant	
Non-compliant	

Panel Recommendations

- R10.1** The Department should further consolidate and restructure its Divisions, in order to address contemporary issues of the society and the profession, enhance its emerging identity and maintain the future development and sustainability of the program given the drastic reduction of the number of faculty members in the last decade.
- R10.2** The stated goal of the Department of production of high-quality research activity needs to be further enhanced.
- R10.3** The University should provide the Department with additional faculty positions (additional to the four prospective allocated ones) and building recourses.
- R10.4** The Department should implement its own external evaluation process. A possible solution might be the establishment of an advisory professional board whose members volunteer their services for the benefit of the Department.

PART C: CONCLUSIONS

I. Features of Good Practice

- High quality of educational process and curriculum, following the best contemporary practices.
- Excellent collaboration between teaching staff, administrators, and students.
- The preparation that the program affords their alumni which manifest itself in excellent and remarkable professional careers.
- Good balance between academic research, exhibitions and field applications.
- Strong interaction with the local community partners, both in the public and private sectors, and excellent response to their needs.

II. Areas of Weakness

- The number of teaching staff is **dramatically low** especially in relation to the broad academic goals of the Department.
- Ratio of academic staff to students.
- Existing infrastructure needs updating and improvement, especially in students work-space allocation.
- Lack of conditions for appropriate faculty development, systematic self-evaluation process, and opportunities for mobility.

III. Recommendations for Follow-up Actions

- Aristotle University of Thessaloniki and the Ministry of Education **must** immediately **increase** the numbers of the academic staff.
- **Drastically improve** the student - teaching staff ratio.
- Establish a local *Liaison Office* (Γραφείο Διασύνδεσης), enhance the role of the alumni and further improve their tracking.
- Enhance use of the Public Information outlets and social media to promote the Architecture Department's contribution.
- Provide opportunities for further faculty development.
- Consider potential reorganization of the departmental structure (τομείς) and improvement of the Department's identity in order to accommodate the current discourse and faculty interests.

IV. Summary & Overall Assessment

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

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

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

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

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

The External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel agrees that this Programme leads to a Level 7 Qualification according to the National & European Qualifications Network (Integrated Master)	YES	NO
	X	

The members of the External Evaluation & Accreditation Panel

Name and Surname

Signature

- 1. Professor Loukas Kalisperis, (Chair)**
Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pennsylvania, USA
- 2. Assoc. Professor Marilena Kourniati**
École Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture Paris – Val de Seine, Paris, France
- 3. Ms. Evdoxia Papalioura, MPhil**
Member of the Technical Chamber of Greece, Thessaloniki, Greece
- 4. Professor Marios C. Phocas**
University of Cyprus, Nicosia, Cyprus
- 5. Professor Georgia Traganou**
Parsons School of Design, The New School, New York, USA